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TO
THE VERY REVEREND
The Rector
AND THE OTHER MEMBERS
OF
The Catholic University of Ireland
THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED.

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PREFACE.

“INISFAIL” is an attempt to represent, as in a picture, the most stormy, but the most poetic period of Irish History. In old times poetry and history were more akin than they have lately been. In England and in Spain a series of ballads had early grown up, out of which rose the later literature of each country, ballads that recorded many a precious passage of old times, and embodied the genius, as well as the manners, of the past. Irish History no longer stands thus related to letters. Nowhere in Ireland can we move without being challenged by the monuments of the past ; yet, for most of her sons, as for the traveller, there exists no Alfred, and no Wallace. For the English-speaking part of the population nearly the whole of the old bardic literature has perished, and with it much of a history admirable for the manner in which it exhibits the finer, together with the more barbaric, traits of a society the civilization of which had been checked by adverse circumstances. Yet for centuries the bards occupied a more important position in Ireland than in any other part of the West : their dignity was next to the regal ; their influence over the people unbounded ; and they possessed all the secular learning then in the land. The Gael required that

even the maxims of the law should be delivered to him in verse, as well as that the lines of the Princes and Chiefs should be thus traced. The influence of the priest alone equalled that of the bard, and between these two orders a rivalry often existed. We have the testimony of Spencer as to the merit and power of the bards so late as the sixteenth century.

In Ireland the alliance between poetry and love of country was, perhaps, closer than elsewhere. For ages the History of Ireland was but a record of calamity; and to every generous nature his country becomes endeared by her sufferings. But even in earlier days the bards must have found their best subjects for song among the picturesque and romantic details of Irish story. The antiquity to which it mounted excited imaginative sympathies: the dimness with which large tracts of it were invested gave a more striking prominence to what remained of it—those great, half-isolated Records which loomed through the mist, like mountain behind mountain retiring into more and more remote distance.

Long before those three golden centuries succeeding her conversion to Christianity Ireland possessed civilization, laws, and a time-honoured monarchy. It was in part for this reason that she at once became the great missionary land of the north, while foreigners flocked in crowds to her colleges. Her Faith was a tree that rapidly "covered the lands with its branches," because it had been planted "by the water side." If Ireland had to "wait long for her martyrs," it was because the genius of her early civilization was less opposed than that of other Western Nations to Christianity. Most of Europe, including Britain and Gaul, had received the Roman civilization. With Pagan Rome Ireland had

had no dealings, closely as she has been linked with Christian Rome. She was an Eastern nation in the West. Her civilization was patriarchal, not military, in essence; its type was the family, not the army; it had more affinity with the Church, when the Church yet dwelled in tents, than with the complex fabric of the State. It was a civilization of clans. In every clan the bard sang the ancient glories of the race. Another Eastern characteristic which Ireland has never lost is that which often, but erroneously, goes by the name of "Fatalism." The intense Theism which has ever belonged to the East survived in Ireland as an instinct no less than as a Faith. The Irish have commonly found it more easy to recognize the Divine hand than secondary causes. They have ever regarded Religion as the chief possession of man. Such nations are ever attached to the Past.

Her Past was indeed too great a thing to be forgotten. Even in our own days, remote and prosaic, by the banks of the Boyne, amid more troubled memorials, we stand and wonder at those tumuli, which remind us of the pyramids, and the winding galleries of which are supposed to retain the ashes of those kings of the Tuatha de Danaun, who ruled in Ireland before the Milesian race. In the isles of Arran, in Kerry, and in Donegal, we still find the remains of cairn and cromlech, and rath, of stone forts, and of those singular houses called "cloghauns" with their strange bee-hive roofs. The Royal Irish Academy shews us its silver shields, golden crowns, cups, torques, spear-heads of bronze, &c. The illuminated Missals and Breviaries of the Dublin University prove to us that no sooner had the land become Christian than it applied to sacred purposes the skill it had long

before possessed. Centuries earlier, when the neighbouring countries were barbarous, its Brehon Laws had constituted a complete code of civil rule; while many of its social usages, fosterage, for instance, and the clan tenure of land, hereditary offices, eric, &c., were as deeply rooted in the national heart, as when, 1500 years later, arbitrary laws endeavoured in vain to eradicate them. The long list of 118 kings, previous to the time of St. Patrick, astonishes us at first; but, on examining the material records still existing, we find abundant proofs of the antiquity of Irish civilization. The traces of the husbandman's labour remains on the summit of hills which have not been cultivated within the records of tradition, and the implements with which he toiled have been found in the depth of forest or bog.

If ancient memorials of Ireland are interesting to us, how much more so must they have proved to the Irish of an earlier day! A green and woody knoll beside Lough Derg is all that for us remains of Kincora, the palace of the Munster Kings, and home of Brian the Great. But to a Gael in the fifteenth century its ruins must have spoken a language as intelligible as that in which old castles battered by Mountjoy address us. To the Irishman, prince or peasant, Nial of the Nine Hostages was as familiar a name as Bruce was to the Scottish. Bard and chronicler told how, long before St. Patrick had summoned King Laeghaire to believe, Nial had ruled over all Ireland; how he had been the ancestor of the tribe of Hi-Nial, from which were descended the Princes of Tirconnell and Tyrone, at whose name the children of Norman nobles in the *Pale*, the four counties round Dublin, trembled; how he had sent against Britain and Gaul those naval expeditions, still for us recorded in

Roman verse ;* how he had leagued with his countrymen in Scotland, those Scoti who with the Picts had again and again driven back the Romans behind their further wall till they left the land defenceless ; and how, at last, he had fallen at sea, in the port of Boulogne, by the hand of his rival, Eochy. From priest as well as bard he would have heard of the Irish Numa, King Cormac ; how he had succeeded to his father, A.D. 227 ; how he had established three colleges, one for war, one for history, and one for jurisprudence ; how he had reduced the old Brehon Law into a code ; how he had assembled at his palace of Tara his bards and chroniclers, and commanded them to collect all the ancient annals of Ireland into a series—the “ Psalter of Tara ;” how he had written a book called “ the Institutions of a Prince,” and stored in it the civil wisdom of his time ; how, in obedience to law, he had resigned his throne on becoming disfigured by a wound ; and how it was piously believed that, before his death, Christianity had reached him, and he had become a believer.

Still more often would he have heard the tale of King Cormac’s Grandfather, Conn of the Hundred Fights, who succeeded to the crown of all Ireland, A.D. 123, and who was at last compelled to surrender one half of it to Eoghan More (Eugene the Great), King of Munster. He would have heard how the latter, on the war breaking out again, had sought and found allies in Spain and with them had perished in a night surprise ; how his rival, Conn of the Hundred Fights, was slain, in the hundredth year of his age, by a king of Ulster ; and how

* “ Totam cum Scotus Iernem
Movit, et infesto spumavit reinige Tethys.”—*Claudian*.

from a king who united the blood of Conn and of Eugene were descended the great houses of Munster, those of the Dalcassian race, as the O'Briens, who held sway in Thomond or north Munster, and those of the Eugenic race, as the Mac Carthys, who held it for so many years in Desmond or south Munster, and were at last obliged to share it with the Geraldines.

But the records of which every song-loving Gael heard went up to periods long before the Christian Era. He heard how at a time when the bards had long enjoyed the dignities in Christian times bestowed on the clergy, a storm had arisen against this song-church, accused of inordinate wealth and abused power, and for an interval driven it into exile. He heard how, earlier still, King Eochy had constituted the five provincial kingdoms, as centuries previously King Ugony More had divided Ireland into twenty-five, for the benefit of his twenty-five sons, compelling his people to swear by the "sun and the moon, the dew, and all elements visible and invisible," that their inheritance should not be taken from them forever. He heard how Emania, the palace of the Ulster kings had been built, before the time of Ugony, by Queen Macha, who had compelled rival princes to toil at the foundations, and marked with the point of her torque the spot where the work was to begin. The annalist of Clonmaenaise told him how for 850 years the Red-branch Knights, the great order of Pagan Chivalry, had gone in and come out among its halls; how another Queen, Maeve, or Maude, who had herself built the Connaught Palace of Cruachan, invaded Ulster at the head of her army; how her Gamanradians of Iorras had fought with the Red-branch Chivalry; and how, centuries later, the three Collas had burned to the ground that Emania

of which the only record remaining was then a lonely rath near Armagh! The chronicler would then have told him that the palace of Tara had been built by King Ollamh Fodhla centuries before even that of Emania had been heard of; that in it, reign after reign, was held the great Triennial Assembly of chiefs, bards, and historians; that each warrior had taken the seat appointed for him beneath his own banner, during deliberations conducted with a solemnity half regal, half sacerdotal; that these assemblies continued to take place till A.D. 554, and that it was deserted for ever in consequence of a malison pronounced against it by St. Rodanus, of Lothra. Emania had enjoyed more years of splendour than had elapsed between the first Danish invasion and Queen Elizabeth's wars; yet its greatness was over before Ireland had confessed the Christian Faith. Tara had lasted longer than the whole period of Danish, Norman, and Saxon wars united; yet the weeds had begun to creep over its old rath as many centuries before Henry II. had landed in Ireland as had elapsed between his time and that of the Anglo-Dutch invasion.

Glancing thus back with the bards from epoch to epoch we reach at last the remote one of the Milesian settlement. The most learned among recent antiquarians assure us that a sceptical spirit respecting that settlement is as unphilosophical as a credulous spirit would have been regarded during the last century. They affirm that the whole social system of Ireland having been based upon genealogical claims, her most important institutions were formed for the purpose of recording facts and dates accurately; and they state that the early chronicles are remarkably confirmed by Science as regards eclipses,

astronomical calculations, &c. It is certain that the Gael ever looked upon this period as the authentic beginning of Irish glories, however problematical her earlier legends might be. Rejecting the claims to a greater antiquity, Charles O'Connor, of Balenagar, assigns to the establishment of the Milesian monarchy in Ireland the date of 760 years before our Era, making it thus nearly contemporaneous with the foundation of Rome. * A race called Gadelian, or Gaelic, and at a later period called Scoti (as is supposed from their claims to a *Scythian* descent), migrated to Ireland from Spain under the leadership of the six sons of Milesius, king of that country. Their names were Heber, Heremon, Donn, Colpa, Ir, and Amergin. The brothers founded that Gaelic monarchy which had lasted for nearly 2,000 years when the mighty Norman race extended its conquests from England to Ireland, a land the political and religious institutions of which had not yet wholly recovered the effects of the Danish inroads.

It is with the Norman conquests in Ireland that the present Poem commences. It is necessary to make a few remarks respecting the chief characteristics of Irish History from that period to the latter part of the eighteenth century.

The six centuries of Irish History, illustrated by "*INISFAIL*," divide themselves into three portions. The first endured for about 300 years. Its predominant characteristic was Outlawry. The Brehon Law was set aside by the conquering race, and the English Law was refused. The weak were the prey of the strong.† Yet even in those ages of wrong and rapine all was not

* See Note in p. 15.

† See Note in p. 55, and p. 70.

suffering. Flowers spring up by the torrent's bed; and many a gay song was sung beneath the invader's fortress. Moreover, in the midst of the Norman settlements, the Gaelic chief held his own, and the old clan life went on as before. Partly through intermarriages, the Norman nobles, in the remoter parts of Ireland, became Irish Chiefs, speaking the national language, and adopting the national usages. It is thus that Keating, writing his history amid the storms of the seventeenth century, speaks of this race, "Notwithstanding what has been said of the cruelties and sacrilegious acts of some of those foreigners who came into Ireland, many of them were men of virtue and strict piety, who promoted the service of God and the cause of religion by erecting churches and monasteries, and bestowing large revenues upon them for their support; and God rewarded their charity and acts of mercy with particular marks of His favour, and not only blessed them in their own persons, but in a noble and worthy posterity." Their gradual amalgamation with the nation at large is a pledge that no estrangement of race or class among Ireland's sons can be permanent.

The second period is characterized by the wars of Religion. They completed the union of the Gaelic and Norman races. When the last great act of the tragedy had come, at the same side the ancient foes fought and fell. The Cromwellian victories, and the confiscation of more than half Ireland at that time, reduced with comparatively few exceptions the chiefs of both the old races to that condition to which the Geraldines of Desmond had previously been brought by the confiscations of Elizabeth, and the Ulster princes by those of James I. This period ends with the dethronement of James II.

when the fall of the old Monarchy was consummated by that of the old Nobility and the old Faith.

The third period is that of the Penal Laws, and lasted till the days of Grattan. A succession of wars, renewed during centuries with heroic perseverance, in defence of ancient laws, national existence, and religious freedom, were barren of their intended result. Foreign alliances, even during periods when England was torn by dynastic and religious dissensions, had always proved abortive. The struggle had but rendered Ireland famous among the nations, and scattered among them her warriors, as her missionaries had been scattered in old times. Wrong had run its complete course. But the people *endured*. The Faith for which it had suffered preserved the nationality. The chains fell off. A more glorious triumph than that so often sought had been reserved for Ireland. It was awarded, not to a fortunate moment, but to silent years; not to nobles, but to a people—among whom, however, many convulsions had sown wide the seed of nobility; not to spasmodic action, but to inflexible fortitude; not to arms, but to faith. When the storm had rolled by there emerged a People and a Religion.

Persons of the most different prepossessions have arrived at practically the same estimate of Irish History, and in it have thus found the moral of the tale.

The Catholic sees in Ireland an image of the Church itself—for three centuries the great missionary of the Faith; for three later its martyr; ever in tribulation, but never consumed; at one time exalted as a nation, at another deposed from nationhood. but to become more powerful as a race, and effecting more in its dispersions than it could have done if oppression, and the

poverty bequeathed by oppression, had never driven it from home. To one of a different creed a conclusion morally the same is differently coloured. Justice, he says, ultimately triumphs over wrong. Liberty cannot be trampled down for ever. A Religion is a Cause : and a cause and a people in permanent union are indomitable. The philosopher shapes the result thus :—The relation between the three periods of Irish History is logical. The Outlawry of the first period rendered it impossible that in the second a new religion should be introduced into Ireland by means of Law. Who were to bow before the new laws at variance with the old traditions ? Not kernes, who had never had the benefit of law : not Barons, whose only law had been their own will. The struggle but identified for ever the National sentiment with the Catholic sentiment. Equally close appears to him the connection between the second and the third period of Irish History. The Penal Laws of the latter were blunted by the wholesale confiscations of the former. Misery became the pledge for fidelity. To the Irish people there remained nothing but their Faith. During the long night of persecution its truths shone out like stars, and wrote themselves indelibly on the heart of the nation. Its priests were its only friends : the next world was its nearest hope : and it was not likely that either would be forsaken. In the end, permanent instincts and principles triumphed over temporary necessities. In the failure of persecuting laws and the restoration of Ireland one man sees the victory of Faith, another that of Justice, and a third that of Reason ; three things that ever work, on the long run, to the same result.

In these days few are probably so biassed by party

bitterness as to grudge an epitaph to Virtue and Calamity in times gone by. But were the History of Ireland rightly studied by the more intelligent and influential of her sons (by the people it has never been forgotten) how many obstacles would be removed to kindly feeling between classes! how much would misinterpretation of motives be abated! how zealous would all honorable men be to perpetuate the right, and to abolish every vestige of inequality in the Present that gives a bitterness, not known in other countries, to those heroic recollections of the Past from which all nations, except the meanest, derive their moral life. Ireland has suffered grievously from ignorance of Irish History, and we are still reminded by some persons that even the "pride of knowledge" hardly exceeds the occasional pride of ignorance. That ignorance was not dispelled by the antiquarian labours of Ussher and Ware, Ledwich and Lanigan, and O'Connor. Let us hope that the kindred labours of Dr. Petrie, Dr. Todd, Dean Graves, Dr. Reaves, and those great, lamented scholars, Dr. O'Donovan, and Professor O'Curry, labours as distinguished by religious impartiality as by depth, may prove more successful. A timid caution may shrink from historical studies (as though in an age of education the most interesting portion of human knowledge could be suppressed), but a manly prudence will enjoin them. It is only when the present has received the great interpretation of the past that the paths of wisdom and virtue lie plain before us.

To such studies poetry may contribute. Sir Walter Scott added ballads of his own to the Border Minstrelsy and the Songs of the Jacobites; and in those of Lord Macaulay and Professor Aytoun, the Puritans and

Cavaliers sing their hate or love as vividly, and therefore as instructively, as they could have done in the days of Cromwell and Rupert. As such poems make us acquainted with the deeper springs of action, and with those imaginative instincts the might of which, like that of the imponderable agents in the material world, is at once secret and incalculable, history forgets party politics in human interests. It is thus that poetry exercises her high moral function in connection with history. She deepens our sympathies with those who contended for the Right; yet she reminds us also of the allowance to be made for those who were unhappily ranged on the opposite side, whether by necessity, by custom, or by that vain and aggressive patriotism to which must be assigned a place among the illicit afflictions. Her spirit is comprehensive. She takes large views of things—discerning and confessing upon which side, *on the whole*, has been the Right, and on which the Wrong: for, as regards mere detail, it is obvious that, so long as retaliation remains an attribute of our fallen nature, there must, in every prolonged struggle, be much of incidental wrong at both sides. But her spirit is also penetrating. She recognises the force of hostile traditions, detects high impulses under unworthy disguises, and distinguishes between the individual and the cause. Thus inspired, history is enabled at once to discharge its two great correlative duties, that to Justice, which so many evade in promiscuous condemnation, and that to Charity, a substitute for which is so often found in moral indifference.

“*INISFAIL*” may be regarded as a National Chronicle cast in a poetic form. Its aim is to embody the *essence* of a nation’s history—a theme, I believe, original in poetry. Contemporary historic poems touch us with a

magical hand ; but they often pass by the most important events, and linger beside the most trivial. Looking back upon history, as from a vantage ground, its general proportions become palpable ; and the themes to which poetry attaches herself are either those critical junctures upon which the fortunes of a nation turn, or such accidents of a lighter sort as illustrate the character of a race. A historic series of poems thus becomes possible, the interest of which is continuous, and the course of which reveals an increasing significance. Such a series, however, as it constitutes a Whole, must be read in its proper order if its meaning is to be understood, and the Unity of the poem is to be felt. The character of Irish History rendered it natural that its illustration should be chiefly lyrical, though not infrequently cast in the ballad form also. In this respect I have endeavoured, where I might, to imitate the example of Ireland's ancient bards. Throughout, I have endeavoured to be true to the inner spirit of Irish History, constant to its meaning, and following its changes. This accounts for the change of treatment that the reader will observe in the three Parts of the poem which correspond with the three periods of the history recorded. In Part I. the tone is chiefly legendary, and the treatment objective, because the period of Irish History illustrated in it is that which bordered most nearly upon the legends of Ireland's heroic time. In Part II. the tone becomes more dramatic, the tragic struggle having reached its agony. In Part III. the more impassioned part of the conflict being over, the predominant tone is elegiac. The same fidelity to Irish History rendered necessary that recurrence to certain fundamental *ideas* which the reader will observe, as the poem advances, in various degrees of

development—such ideas as those of a Providence punishing at once and exalting; the penance of the Norman; the penance of the Gael; the Apostolic mission of Ireland; her undying hope; the fidelity of her sons in far lands, &c. The same note is struck again and again in the life of a nation, as in that of an individual, but ever in a different octave. Everywhere I have endeavoured to make the human prevail over the merely political interest of the theme, and to refer to Ireland's Faith simply in its national relations, apart from polemics. A National Chronicle in verse would, if faithful, be an echo of that voice which comes from the heart of a people, and is heard in festive hall and in the village circle, in the church-porch, and on the battle-field. That voice has many tones besides the sadder and more solemn—it records the brief pathetic joy which vanishes like a flame, and the hope like the perennial fountain. *The main scope, however, of a poem which illustrates the interior life of a nation—the biography of a people—must be moral. The moral of a brief individual life is often hidden. Nations are patriarchs; and their lives last long enough to vindicate the ways of God.

Poetry has ever made its boast of what is called Poetic Justice. Nowhere is that justice more manifested than in the history of a race. But such a history must be contemplated from the right point of view, which can only be that of Religion. It is a just perspective that reveals the harmony. Such a harmony would be presented to us by the history of the world, if we could grasp it as a whole. It is presented to us in that of the Chosen People (the only history entirely true): and to the history of that people, so long as it remained faithful, there will ever be found points of

resemblance in that of other Nations, so long as they have been faithful, and so long as their life has been the life from within, not the mere outward life of material prosperity. In them will ever be found that result which we note so pre-eminently in the History of Ireland—the weapons of oppression converted to the ends of right—outward affliction ending in moral triumph—Divine strength perfected in man's weakness.

It has been said that Irish History abounds in touching and dramatic details, but that it is essentially fragmentary. Religion imparts completeness to it. When Religion threw off the bonds of centuries, Irish History entered on its consummation, and justice won the most exalted of her triumphs in modern times. Had it been otherwise, Irish History would have been no theme for song. Most unfit for poetry, however pathetic it may be, is any subject the substance of which is but violence and wrong, and the main resultant of which is despondency. Under the tumults with which poetry deals there is ever an inner voice of peace. *Memory—mournful and faithful—has been called by some the great Inspirer of Poetry. There is a Hope, the sister of devout Memory, which is its inspirer no less. Such Hope may stand on a tombstone; but her eyes are fixed on heaven; and if her Song begins in dirges it ends in hymns.

* "*Desiderium*."—See MR. KEBLE'S *Lectures on Poetry*.

INISFAIL ;
A LYRICAL CHRONICLE OF IRELAND,
In Three Parts.

" A dirge devoutly breathed o'er sorrows past."
WORDSWORTH.

- PART I.
1. THE INVASION.
2. THE OUTLAWRY.

The period of Irish history illustrated by the following poem is that included between the latter part of the twelfth century and the latter part of the eighteenth. That period presents the unity of scope which poetry needs. It begins with the evening twilight that succeeded a long and radiant, though often stormy, day ; it keeps the watches of a tragic night ; and it ends with the happier omens of returning dawn. To these six centuries belongs also a remarkable unity of spirit. All the struggles that shook them were characterized at once by the spirit of Liberty and that of Loyalty, whether directed to Gaelic Princes, to Norman Chiefs, who had become Irish, to Charles, or to James. Recent, and ancient, Irish history have, each of them, a spirit of its own. "Inisfail" is restricted by its theme to the intermediate period ; but in its bard-songs occasional allusions are made to Ireland's heroic time, that of her kings and saints, who flourished previous to the Danish incursions. Truth of costume required such bardic allusions, which are also, perhaps, not without their advantage, supplying, as they do, something analogous to the golden back-ground the old painters were fond of.

PART I.

Prologue.

THE THREE WOES.

THAT Angel whose charge is Eire sang thus
o'er the dark isle winging:—

By a virgin his song was heard at a tempest's
ruinous close:

“Three golden ages God gave while your tender
“green blade was springing:

“Faith's earliest harvest is reap'd. To-day
“God sends you three Woes.

“For ages three, without Laws ye shall flee as
“beasts in the forest:

“For an age, and a half age, Faith shall bring
“not peace but a sword:

“Then Laws shall rend you, like eagles, sharp-
“fang'd, of your scourges the sorest:

“ When these three Woes are past look up, for
“ your Hope is restored.

“ The times of your woe shall be twice the time
“ of your foregone glory :

“ But fourfold at last shall lie the grain on
“ your granary floor.”

The seas in vapour shall fleet, and in ashes the
mountains hoary :

Let God do that which He wills. Let His
servants endure and adore !

THE WARNING.

A. D. 1170.

I.

IN the heaven were portents dire :
On the earth were sign and omen :
Bleeding stars and rain of fire

Dearth and plague foretold their coming.
Causeless panics on the crowd
Fell, and strong men wept aloud :
Ere the Northmen cross'd the seas,
Said the bards, were signs like these.

II.

Time was given us to repent :
Prophets challeng'd plain and city :
But we scorn'd each warning sent,
And outwrestled God's great pity.
'Twixt the blood-stained brother bands
Mitred Laurence raised his hands,*
Raised Saint Patrick's cross on high :
We despised him ; and we die.

THE PAST GLORIES.

I.

OUR Kings sat of old in Emania and Tara :
Those new kings whence are they ? Their
names are unknown !
Our saints lie entomb'd in Ardmagh and Cilldara ;
Their relics are healing ; their graves are grass
grown.
Our princes of old, when their warfare was over,
As pilgrims forth wander'd ; as hermits found
rest :
Shall the hand of the stranger their ashes uncover
In Benchor the holy, in Aran the blest ?

* St. Laurence O'Toole, Archbishop of Dublin.

II.

Not so,* by the race our Dalriada planted!

In Alba were children; we sent her a man.

Battles won in Argyle in Dunedin they chaunted;

King Kenneth completed what Fergus began.

Our name is her name: she is Alba no longer:

Her kings are our blood, and she crowns them at

Scone;

Strong-hearted they are, and strong-handed, but

stronger

When throned on our Lia Fail, Destiny's stone!†

* Innumerable authorities, Irish, English, and Scotch, record that remarkable incident, the establishment of an Irish colony in Western Scotland, at that time named Alba—a colony from which that noble country derived its later name, the chief part of its population, and its Royal House, from which, through the Stuarts, our present Sovereign is descended. This settlement is referred to by the Venerable Bede.

† “Malcolm IV., at the age of twelve years, succeeded “to his excellent grandfather, David I., in 1153. Being “a Celtic prince, succeeding to a people of whom the “great proportion were Celts, he was inaugurated at “Scone—with the peculiar ceremonies belonging to the “Scoto-Irish race. In compliance with their ancient “customs, he was placed upon a fated stone, dedicated “to this solemn use, and brought for that purpose from “Ireland, by Fergus, the son of Eric. An Iro-Scot- “tish, or Highland bard, also stepped forward and

THE HOUSE NORMAN.

Among the churches sacked and burnt by Dermot, and his Norman allies, was that of Kells. The monks are supposed to have been interrupted, while celebrating the obsequies of their slaughtered brethren, by the return of the despoilers.

I.

THE walls are black : but the floor is red !
 Blood !—there is blood on the convent floor !
 Woe to the mighty : that blood they shed :

Woe, woe, de Bohun ! Woe, woe, le Poer !
 Fitz-Walter, beware ! the years are strong :
 De Burgh, de Burgh ! God rights the wrong.
 Ye have murder'd priests : the hour draws nigh
 When your sons unshriven, without priest, shall die.

“chaunted to the people a Gaelic poem, containing a
 “catalogue of the young king’s ancestors, from the
 “reign of the same Fergus, founder of the Dynasty.”
 (SIR W. SCOTT’S *History of Scotland*, p. 34, vol. 1.)
 He proceeds to record the removal, by Edward I., of
 the stone of Destiny from Scone to Westminster Abbey,
 where it still supports the chair of Edward the Con-
 fessor, used at coronations.

II.

Toll for the mighty ones : brethren toll !
 They stand astonish'd ! what seek they here ?
 Through tower and through turret the loud winds
 roll,

But the yellow lights shake not around the bier.
 They are here unbidden !—stand back, ye proud !
 God shapes the empires as wind the cloud.
 The offence must come : but the deed is sin :
 Toll the death-bell : the death-psalms begin.

III.

The happy dead with God find rest :
 For them no funeral bell we toll.
 Fitz-Hugh ! Death sits upon thy crest !
 De Clare ! Death sits upon thy soul !
 Toll, monks, the death-bell ; toll for them
 Who masque under helmet and diadem :—
 Death's masque is sin. The living are they
 Who live with God in eternal day !

IV.

Fitz-Maurice is sentenced ! Sound, monks, his
 knell !
 As Roderick fell must de Courcy fall.
 Toll for Fitz-Gerald the funeral bell :
 The blood of O'Rourke is on Lacy's wall.*

* Tiernan O'Rourke was treacherously slain by
 Hugh de Lacy at a conference. In 1317 the de Lacys

The lions are ye of the robber kind!
But when ye lie old in your dens and blind
The wolves and the jackals on you shall prey,
From the same shore sent. Beware that day!

v.

Toll for the conquerors: theirs the doom!
For the great House Norman: its bud is nipt!
Ah, princely house, when your hour is come
Your dirge shall be sung not in church but
crypt!

We mourn you in time. A baser scourge
Than yours that day will forbid the dirge!
Two thousand years to the Gael God gave:—
Four hundred shall open the Norman's grave!

Thus with threne and with stern lament
For their brethren dead the old monks made
moan
In the convent of Kells, the first day of Lent,
One thousand one hundred and seventy one.

joined the standard of Edward Bruce. John de Lacy
fell into the hands of the Lord Justice, and was sen-
tenced to be pressed to death.

THE MALISON.

THE Curse of that land which in ban and in
blessing

Hath puissance through prayer and through
penance, alight

On the False One who whisper'd, the traitor's
hand pressing,

"I ride without guards in the morning—good-
night!"

O beautiful serpent! O woman fiend-hearted!

Wife false to O'Ruark! queen base to thy trust!

The glory of ages for ever departed

That hour from the isle of the saintly and just.

II.

The Curse of that land on the monarchs disloyal,

Who welcomed the invader, and knelt at his
knee!

False Dermot, false Donald—the chieftains once
royal

Of the Deasies and Ossory, cursed let them be!

Their name and their shame make eternal. En-
grave them

On the cliffs which the great billows buffet and
stain :

Like billows the nations, when tyrants enslave
 them,
 Swell up in their fury—not always in vain !

III.

But praise in the churches, and worship and
 honour

To him who, betray'd and deserted, fought on !
 All praise to king Roderick, the prince of Clan-
 Connor,

The king of all Erin, and Cathall his son !
 May the million-voiced chaunt that in endless ex-
 pansion

Sweeps onward through heaven his praises
 prolong ;
 May the heaven of heavens this night be the
 mansion

Of the good king who died in the cloisters of
 Cong !*

* The story of the Irish Helen is well known. Dervorgil, the wife of O'Ruark, Prince of Breffny, fled with Dermot Mac Murrough, King of Leinster. The latter, on his deposition, went to England, where he contracted alliances with Henry II. and Strongbow against Roderick O'Connor, the last Gaelic king of all Ireland. Dervorgil ultimately found a refuge at Mellifont, where she lived in penance and work of charity. Dermot died at Ferns, under circumstances of strange horror. Exhausted by domestic discords, as well as the ca-

THE LEGENDS.

A BARD SONG.

I.

THE woods rose slowly ; the clouds sail'd on ;
Man trod not yet the island wide :
A ship drew near from the rising sun ;—
Who ruled it ? the Scythian Parricide. *
Battles were lost and battles were won ;
New lakes burst open, old forests died :
For ages once more in the land was none :
God slew the race of the Parricide.

II.

There is nothing that lasts save the Pine and
Bard :

I, Fintan the bard, was living then !

lamities of his country, Roderick retired to the monastery he had founded at Cong. He died there at the age of 82, and was interred at Clonmacnoise, the burial-place of the Irish Kings.

* Parthalon. According to the legend he fled from his country, where he had been guilty of parricide, and founded the first colony in Ireland. It was swept off by pestilence after the lapse of 300 years.

Tall grows the pine upon Slieve-Clonard :
 It dies : in the loud harp it lives again.*
 Give praise to the bard and a huge reward !
 Give praise to the bard that gives praise to men !
 My curse upon Aodh the priest of Skard
 Who jeers at the bard-songs of Ikerren !

HYMN,

ON THE FOUNDING OF THE ABBEY OF ST. THOMAS
 THE MARTYR (A BECKET), IN
 DUBLIN, A.D. 1177.

THUS with expiatory rite
 The Roman priest and Laurence sang,
 And loud the regal towers that night
 With music and with feasting rang.

I.

Rejoice thou race of man, rejoice !
 To-day the Church renews her boast
 Of England's Thomas ; and her voice
 Is echoed by the heavenly host.

* The bards claimed a sort of poetical immortality. They were superior to the injuries of time, and spoke as if they had witnessed what they recorded.

Rejoice, whoever love the right ;
Rejoice, ye faithful men and true :
The Prince of Peace o'errules the fight ;
The many fall before the few.

II.

Behold a great high priest with rays
Of martyrdom's red sunset crown'd !
No other like him in the days
Wherein he trod the earth was found.
The swords of men unholy met
Above him clashing, and he bled :
But God, the God he served, hath set
A wreath unfading on his head.

III.

Great is the priestly charge, and great
The line to whom that charge is given !
It comes not, that pontificate,
Save from the great High Priest in heaven !
A frowning king no equal brook'd :
"Obey," he cried, "my will, or die :"
Thomas, like Stephen, heavenward look'd,
And saw the Son of Man on high.

IV.

Blest is the People blest and strong,
That 'mid its pontiffs counts a saint !
His virtuous memory lasting long
Shall keep its altars pure from taint.

The heathen plot, the tyrants rage ;
 But in their Saint the poor shall find.
 A shield, or after many an age
 A light restored to guide the blind.*

THE LEGENDS ;

A BARD-SONG.

I.

DEAD is the Prince of the Silver Hand,†
 And dead Eochy the son of Ere !
 Ere lived Milesius they ruled the land
 Thou hast ruled and lost in turn, O'Ruark !

* "The celebrated Abbey of St. Thomas the Martyr
 "was founded in Dublin by Fitz-Adelm, by order of
 "Henry Second. The site was the place now called
 "Thomas' Court. In the presence of Cardinal Vivian
 "and St. Laurence O'Toole the deputy endowed it with
 "a carucate of land called Donore."—HAVERTY'S *Hist.*
of Ireland, p. 222.

† This belongs to the legendary not the historical
 portion of the Irish Annals. Before the establishment
 of the great Milesian, or Gaelic, race in Ireland, the
 monarchy of which expired with Roderick, the country
 had been successively possessed by two races, the Fir-
 bolgs, and the Tuatha de Danann. Nuad "of the Silver
 Hand" was the leader of the Tuatha de Danann, who are

Two thousand years have pass'd since then,
And clans and kingdoms in blind commotion
Have butted at heaven and sunk again
As the great waves sink in the depths of ocean.

II.

Last King of the Gaels of Eire, be still !
What God decrees must come to pass :
There is none that soundeth His Way or Will :
His hand is iron, and earth is glass.
Where built the Firbolgs there shrieks the owl ;
The Tuatha bequeath'd but the name of Eire :
Roderick, our last of kings, thy cowl
Outweighs the crown of thy kingly sire !

said by the bards to have landed in Ireland A.M. 3303. Eochy, the last of the Firbolgie kings, was slain by them ; and a cairn still shown on the seacoast near Sligo is said to be his grave.

Twenty-seven years later Nuad was killed in battle by Balor "of the mighty blows," a Fomorian. The sway of the Tuatha de Danann is said to have lasted for 197 years, when it was terminated by the immigration of the Milesian race.

The Tuatha de Danann gave Ireland her name. The three names by which Ireland was called in early years, Eire, Banba, and Fodhla, were assigned to her in consequence of their belonging to the wives of the three last kings of the Tuatha de Danann race, each of whom reigned successively during a single year.

THE FAITHFUL NORMAN. *

I.

PRAISE to the valiant and faithful foe!
Give us noble foes, not the friend who lies!
We dread the drugg'd cup, not the open blow;
We dread the old hate in the new disguise.

* Maurice de Prendergast. This Knight "undertook
"to bring the King of Ossory to a conference, on obtain-
"ing the word of Strongbow and O'Brien that he should
"be allowed to return in safety. Understanding, how-
"ever, during the conference, that treachery was about
"to be used towards Mac Gilla Patrick, he rushed into
"the Earl's presence, and 'swore by the cross of his
"sword that no man there that day should dare lay
"hands on the Kyng of Ossory.' Having redeemed
"his word to the Irish Prince by conducting him back
"in safety, and defeated some of O'Brien's men whom
"they met on the way with the spoils of Ossory, he spent
"that night with Mac Gilla Patrick in the woods, and
"returned next day to the Earl."—HAVERTY'S *History*
of Ireland, p. 198.

Ireland is bound to remember both that among her invaders there were to be found such traits; and also that the treachery of some among her own sons contributed to her worst calamities.

To Ossory's King they had pledged their word :
 He stood in their camp, and their pledge they
 broke ;
 Then Maurice the Norman upraised his sword ;
 The cross on its hilt he kiss'd, and spoke :

II.

“ So long as this sword or this arm hath might
 “ I swear by the cross which is lord of all,
 “ By the faith and honour of noble and knight
 “ Who touches you Prince by this hand shall
 fall ! ”

So side by side through the throng they pass'd ;
 And Eire gave praise to the just and true.
 Brave foe ! the Past truth heals at last :
 There is room in the great heart of Eire for
 you !

SONG.

I.

WILLOW-LIKE maid with the long loose
 tresses,
 With locks like Diarba's, and fairy foot
 That gatherest up from the streamlet its cresses
 Above the low caroller bending mute,

Those tresses black in a fillet bind,
Or beware of Manannan the god of the wind!

II.

No fear of the Stranger with feet like those ;
No fear of the robbers that couch in the glen :
But the wind-God blows on thy cheek a rose,
Then back returns to kiss it again.
Manannan they say is the God in air—
So sang the Tuatha—Bind close thy hair !

III.

The red on her cheek was crescent still ;
A smile ran o'er it and made reply
As she cast from the darkling and sparkling rill
The flash of a darkling and sparkling eye ;
Then over her shoulder her long locks flung
And homeward tripp'd with a mirthful song.

THE LEGENDS.

A BARD SONG.

I.

THEY fought ere sunrise at Tor Conainn ; *
All day they fought on the wild sea-shore ;
The sun dropp'd downward ; they fought amain ;
The tide rose upward ; they fought the more.
The sands were cover'd ; the sea grew red ;
The warriors fought in the reddening wave ;
That night the sea was the sea-king's bed ;
The land-king drifted by cliff and cave.

II.

Great was the rage in those ancient days
(We were pagans then) in the land of Eire ;

* This battle is the chief memorial of the Nemedians, (said to have come from the borders of the Euxine) and of the Fomorians. The latter race are thought to have been pirates from Scandinavia. Their memory is preserved in the "Giants' Causeway," the Irish name of which is Cloghanna-Fomharaigh, or "Stepping Stones of the Fomorians." Nearly the whole Nemedian army were drowned by the sea in this battle, which was fought on the coast of Donegal, about A. M. 3066.

Like eagles men vanquish'd the noontide blaze;
 Their bones were granite; their nerves were
 wire.

We are hinds to-day! The Nemedian kings
 Like elk and bison of old stalk'd forth;
 Their name—the sea-kings'—for ever clings
 To the "Giant Stepping Stones" round the
 North.

THE BARD ETHELL.

THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

I.

I AM Ethell, the son of Conn!
 Here I live at the foot of the hill;
 I am clansman to Brian and servant to none;
 Whom I hated I hate, whom I loved love still.
 Blind am I. On milk I live,
 And meat (God sends it) on each Saint's Day,
 Though Donald Mac Art—may he never thrive—
 Last Shrovetide drove half my kine away!

II.

At the brown hill's base, by the pale blue lake,
 I dwell, and see the things I saw;
 The heron flap heavily up from the brake,

The crow fly homeward with twig or straw,
The wild duck, a silver line in wake,
Cutting the still mere to far Bunaw.
And the things that I heard though deaf I hear ;
From the tower in the island the feastful cheer ;
The horn from the woodlands ; the plunge of the
stag,
With the loud hounds after him, down from the
crag.
Sweet is the chase but the battle is sweeter ;
More healthful, more joyous, for true men meeter!

III.

My hand is weak ; it once was strong :
My heart burns still with its ancient fire :
If any man smites me he does me wrong,
For I was the Bard of Brian Mac Guire.
If any man slay me—not unaware,
By no chance blow, nor in wine and revel,
I have stored beforehand a curse in my prayer
For his kith and kin : for his deed is evil.

IV.

There never was king, and there never will be,
In battle or banquet like Malachi!
The Seers his reign had predicted long ;
He honour'd the bards, and gave gold for song.

If rebels arose he put out their eyes ;
If robbers plunder'd or burn'd the fanes
He hung them in chaplets, like rosaries,
That others beholding might take more pains !
There was none to women more reverent-minded
For he held his mother, and Mary, dear ;
If any man wrong'd them that man he blinded
Or straight amerced him of hand or ear.
There was none who founded more convents—
none ;

In his palace the old and the poor were fed ;
The orphan might walk, or the widow's son,
Without groom or page to his throne or bed.
In his council he mused with great brows divine
And eyes like the eyes of the musing kine
Upholding a Sceptre o'er which men said
Seven Spirits of Wisdom like fire-tongues played.
He drain'd ten lakes and he built ten bridges ;
He bought a gold book for a thousand cows ;
He slew ten Princes who brake their pledges ;
With the bribed and the base he scorn'd to ca-
rouse.

He was sweet and awful ; through all his reign
God gave great harvests to vale and plain ;
From his nurse's milk he was kind and brave :
And when he went down to his well-wept grave
Through the triumph of penance his soul uprose
To God and the saints. Not so his foes !

v.

The king that came after ! ah woe, woe, woe !
He doubted his friend and he trusted his foe.
He bought and he sold : his kingdom old

He pledged and he pawn'd to avenge a spite :
No bard or prophet his birth foretold :

He was guarded and warded both day and
night :

He counsell'd with fools and had boors at his
feast ;

He was cruel to Christian and kind to beast :
Men smiled when they talk'd of him far o'er the
wave :

Well paid were the mourners that wept o'er his
grave.

God plagued for his sake his people sore :—

They sinn'd ; for the people should watch and
pray

That their prayers, like angels at window and
door,

May keep from the king the bad thought away !

vi.

The sun has risen : on lip and brow

He greets me—I feel it—with golden wand.

Ah, bright-faced Norna ! I see thee now ;

Where first I saw thee I see thee stand !

From the trellis the girl look'd down on me :
Her maidens stood near : it was late in spring :
The grey priests laugh'd as she cried in glee

“ Good bard, a song in my honour sing ! ”

I sang her praise in a loud-voiced hymn
To God who had fashion'd her, face and limb,
For the praise of the clan and the land's behoof :
So she flung me a flower from the trellis roof.
Ere long I saw her the hill descending—

O'er the lake the May morning rose moist and
slow :

She pray'd me (her smile with the sweet voice
blending)

To teach her all that a woman should know.
Panting she stood : she was out of breath :

The wave of her little breast was shaking :
From eyes still childish and dark as death
Came womanhood's dawn through a dew-cloud
breaking.

Norna was never long time the same :

By a spirit so strong was her slight form
moulded

The curves swell'd out of the flower-like frame

In joy ; in grief to a bud she folded :
As she listen'd her eyes grew bright and large
Like springs rain-fed that dilate their marge.

VII.

So I taught her the hymn of Patrick the apostle,
 And the marvels of Bridget and Columkille :
 And ere long she sang like the lark or the throstle,
 Sang the deeds of the servants of God's high will :
 I told her of Brendon who found afar
 Another world 'neath the western star ;
 Of our three great bishops in Lindisfarne isle ;
 Of St. Fursey the wond'rous, Fiacre without
 guile ;
 Of Sedulius, hymn-maker when hymns were rare ;*
 Of Scotus the subtle who clove a hair
 Into sixty parts, and had marge to spare.
 To her brother I spake of Oisin and Fionn,
 And they wept at the death of great Oisin's son.†

* This Christian poet, whose hymns are still used in the Offices of the Church, was an Irishman, and flourished in the fifth century.

† The publications of the Ossianic Society have made us familiar with Fionn Mac Cumhal (the Fingal of McPherson) chief of the far-famed Irish militia, instituted in the third century to protect the kingdom from foreign invasion. Its organization rendered it an army of extraordinary efficiency ; but existing as a separate power it became in time as formidable to the native sovereigns as to foreigners. The terrible battle of Gavra was its ruin. In it Oscar, the son of Oisin (or Ossian) and consequently the grandson of Fionn, fell in single combat with the Irish king Carbry, and nearly

I taught the heart of the boy to revel
 In tales of old greatness that never tire,
 And the virgin's, up-springing from earth's low
 level,
 To wed with heaven like the altar fire.
 I taught all that a woman should know :
 And that none might teach her worse lore I gave
 her
 A dagger keen, and I taught her the blow
 That subdues the knave to discreet behaviour.
 A sand-stone there on my knee she set,
 And sharpen'd its point—I can see her yet—
 I held back her hair and she sharpen'd the edge
 While the wind piped low through the reeds and
 sedge.

VIII.

She died in the convent on Ina's height :—
 I saw her the day that she took the veil :
 As slender she stood as the Paschal light,
 As tall and slender and bright and pale !
 When I saw her I dropp'd as dead : bereaven
 Is earth when her holy ones leave her for heaven :
 Her brother fell in the fight at Beigh :
 May they plead for me, both, on my dying day !

his whole army perished with him, A.D. 284. To this
 day Fionn and Oisín are household names in those parts
 of western Ireland in which the traditional Gaelic poetry
 is recited.

IX.

All praise to the man who brought us the Faith !
 'Tis a staff by day and our pillow in death !

All praise, I say, to the holy youth

Who heard in a dream* from Tyrawley's strand

That wail, "put forth o'er the sea thy hand ;

In the dark we die : give us hope and truth !"

But Patrick built not on Iorras' shore

That convent where now the Franciscans
 dwell :

Columba was mighty in prayer and war ;

But the young monk preaches, as loud as the
 bell,

That love must rule all and all wrongs be for-
 given,

Or else, he is sure, we shall reach not heaven !

This doctrine I count right cruel and hard :

And when I am laid in the old churchyard

* Some time after St. Patrick, then about thirty years of age, had placed himself under the direction of St. Germain of Auxerre, he had a marvellous vision. "A man named Victoricius appeared to present him "with a large parcel of letters, one of which was inscribed, 'the voice of the Irish ;' and while reading it "St. Patrick thought he heard the cries of a multitude "of people near the wood of Foelut, in the district now "called Tyrawley, in Mayo, saying, 'We entreat thee "to come, holy youth, and walk still among us.'"—
 HAVERTY'S *Hist. of Ireland*, p. 64.

The habit of Francis I will not wear ;
Nor wear I his cord, or the cloth of hair
I secret. Men dwindle : till psalm and prayer
Had soften'd the land no Dane dwelt there !

X.

I forgive old Cathbar who sank my boat :

Must I pardon Feargal who slew my son ;—
Or the pirate, Strongbow, who burn'd Granote,
They tell me, and in it nine priests, a nun,
And, worst, Saint Finian's old crosier staff ?
At forgiveness like that I spit and laugh !
My chief, in his wine-cups, forgave twelve men ;
And of these a dozen rebell'd again !

There never was chief more brave than he !

The night he was born Loch Dool up-burst :
He was bard-loving, gift-making, loud of glee,
The last to fly, to advance the first.
He was like the top spray upon Uladh's oak,
He was like the tap-root of Argial's pine :
He was secret and sudden : as lightning his
stroke :

There was none that could fathom his hid
design !

He slept not : if any man scorn'd his alliance
He struck the first blow for a frank defiance
With that look in his face, half night half light,
Like the lake gust-blacken'd and ridged with
white !

There were comely wonders before he died :
 The eagle swoop'd, and the Banshee cried ;
 The witch-elm wept with a blighted bud :
 The spray of the torrent was red with blood :
 The chief, return'd from the mountain's bound,
 Forgat to ask after Bran, his hound.
 We knew he would die : three days were o'er ;—
 He died. We *waked* him for three days more.
 One by one, upon brow and breast
 The whole clan kiss'd him. In peace may he
 rest.

XI.

I sang his dirge. I could sing that time
 Four thousand staves of ancestral rhyme :
 To-day I can scarcely sing the half :
 Of old I was corn and now I am chaff !
 My song to-day is a breeze that shakes
 Feebly the down on the cygnet's breast :
 'Twas then a billow the beach that rakes
 Or a storm that buffets the mountains' crest.
 Whatever I bit with a venom'd song
 Grew sick, were it beast, or tree, or man :
 The wrong'd one bade me avenge his wrong
 With the flail of the Satire and fierce Ode's fan.
 I sang to the chieftains : each stock I traced
 Lest right should grow tangled, through fraud or
 haste.

To princes I sang in a loftier tone
Of Moran the Just who refused a throne ;
Of Moran whose torque would close and choke
The wry-neck'd witness that falsely spoke.
I taught them how to win love and hate,
Not love from all, and to shun debate.
To maids in the bower I sang of love :
And of war at the feastings in hall or grove.

XII.

Great is our Order ; but greater far
Were its pomp and its power in the days of old,
When the five Chief Bards in peace or war
Had thirty bards each in his train enroll'd ;
When Ollave Fodhla in Tara's hall
Fed bards and kings : when the boy, king Nial
Was train'd by Torna : when Britain and Gaul
Their laurel crowns sent to Dallan Forghial.
To-day we can launch the clans into fight :
That day we could freeze them in mid career !
Whatever man knows, was our realm by right :
The lore without music no Gael would hear.
Old Cormac, the brave blind king, was bard
Ere fame rose yet of O'Daly and Ward.
The son of Milesius was bard—" Go back,
" My People,"* he sang ; " ye have done a
wrong !

* This is the earliest record of Irish song. Its im-

“ Nine waves go back o’er the green sea track ;
“ Let your foes their castles and coasts make
 strong.
“ To the island ye came by stealth and at night :
“ She is ours if we win her in all men’s sight ! ”
’Tis past ! some think that we err’d through
 pride,
Though Columba the vengeance turned aside.
Too strong we were not : too rich we were :
Give wealth to knaves :—’tis the true man’s
 snare !

XIII.

But now men lie : they are just no more :
 They forsake the old ways : they quest for new :
They pry and they snuff after strange false lore
 As dogs hunt vermin. It never was true :
I have scorn’d it for twenty years—this babble
That eastward and southward a Saxon rabble
Have won great battles, and rule large lands,
And plight with daughters of ours their hands !
We know the bold Norman o’erset their throne
Long since ! Our lands ! Let them guard their
 own !

port has doubtless been faithfully preserved. It asserts those great principles of Truth and Justice, upon which alone National greatness can be founded.

XIV.

How long He leaves me—the great God—here!

Have I sinn'd some sin, or has God forgotten?
This year I think is my hundredth year:

I am like a bad apple, unripe yet rotten!
They shall lift me ere long, they shall lay me—
the clan—

By the strength of men on mount Cruachan!
God has much to think of! How much He has
seen

And how much is gone by that once has been!

On sandy hills where the rabbits burrow

Are Rath's of Kings men name not now:
On mountain tops I have tracked the furrow
And found in forests the buried plough.

For one now living the strong land then

Gave kindly food and raiment to ten.

No doubt they wax'd proud and their God
defied;

So their harvest He blighted or burned their
hoard;

Or He sent them plague, or He sent the
sword;

Or He sent them lightning; and so they died
Like Dathi, the king, on the dark Alp's side.*

* Dathi the last King of Pagan Ireland, perished,
A.D. 428, on his march into Italy.

XV.

Ah me that man who is made of dust

Should have pride toward God! 'Tis an
angel's sin!

I have often fear'd lest God, the All-just,

Should bend from heaven and sweep earth
clean,

Should sweep us all into corners and holes,

Like dust of the house-floor, both bodies and
souls!

I have often fear'd He would send some wind

In wrath; and the nation wake up stone-blind

In age or in youth we have all wrought ill:

I say not our great king Nial did well

(Although he was Lord of the Pledges Nine)

When, beside subduing this land of Eire,

He raised in Armorica banner and sign,

And wasted the British coast with fire.

Perhaps in his mercy the Lord will say,

'These men! God's help! 'Twas a rough boy

"play!"

He is certain—that young Franciscan Priest—

God sees great sin where men see least:

Yet this were to give unto God the eye

(Unmeet the thought) of the humming fly!

I trust there are small things He scorns to see

In the lowly who cry to Him piteously.

Our hope is Christ. I have wept full oft
He came not to Eire in Oisín's time ;
Though love, and those new monks, would make
men soft

If they were not harden'd by war and rhyme.
I have done my part : my end draws nigh :
I shall leave old Eire with a smile and sigh :
She will miss not me as I miss'd my son :
Yet for her, and her praise, were my best deeds
done.

Man's deeds ! man's deeds ! they are shades that
fleet,

Or ripples like those that break at my feet.
The deeds of my Chief and the deeds of my King
Grow hazy, farseen, like the hills in spring.
Nothing is great save the death on the Cross !

But Pilate and Herod I hate, and know

Had Fionn lived then he had laid them low
Though the world thereby had sustain'd great
loss.

My blindness and deafness and aching back
With meekness I bear for that suffering's sake ;
And the Lent-fast for Mary's sake I love,
And the honour of Him, the Man above !

My songs are all over now :—so best !
They are laid in the heavenly Singer's breast
Who never sings but a star is born :
May we hear His song in the endless morn !

I give glory to God for our battles won
 By wood or river, on bay or creek :
 For Norna, who died ; for my father, Conn :
 For feasts, and the chase on the mountains
 bleak :
 I bewail my sins, both unknown and known,
 And of those I have injured forgiveness seek.
 The men that were wicked to me and mine ;—
 (Not quenching a wrong, nor in war nor wine)
 I forgive and absolve them all, save three :—
 May Christ in His mercy be kind to me !

ST. PATRICK AND THE BARD.

A BARD SONG.

A.D. 433.

THE land is sad, and dark our days :
 Sing us a song of the days that were !—
 Then sang the bard in his Order's praise
 This song of the chief bard of King Laeghaire.

I.

The King* is wroth with a greater wrath
 Than the wrath of Nial or the wrath of Conn !

* Laeghaire, King of all Ireland, was son of Nial of the Nine Hostages.

From his heart to his brow the blood makes path,
And hangs there, a red cloud, beneath his
crown.

II.

Is there any who knows not, from south to
north,

That Laeghaire to-morrow his birthday keeps ?
No fire may be lit upon hill or hearth
Till the King's strong fire in its kingly mirth
Leaps upward from Tara's palace steeps !

III.

Yet Patrick has lighted his Paschal fire
At Slane,—it is Holy Saturday,—
And bless'd his font 'mid the chaunting choir !
From hill to hill the flame makes way :
While the King looks on it his eyes with ire
Flash red, like Mars, under tresses grey.

IV

The great King's captains with drawn swords
rose ;
To avenge their Lord with an oath they
swore ;
The Druids rose and their garments tore ;
“ The strangers to us and our gods are foes ! ”

Then the King to Patrick a herald sent,
Who said, "Come up at noon, and show
"Who lit thy fire, and with what intent?—
"These things the great King Laeghaire would
"know."

v.

But Laeghaire conceal'd twelve men in the way,
Who swore by the sun the Saint to slay.

vi.

When the waters of Boyne began to bask,
And the green meads flashed in the rising sun
The Apostle Evangelist kept his Pasch,
And Erin her grace baptismal won :
Her birthday it was ; his font the rock
He bless'd the land, and he bless'd his flock.

vii.

Then forth to Tara he fared full lowly :
The Staff of Jesus was in his hand ;
Eight priests paced after him chaunting slowly,
Printing their steps on the dewy land.
It was the Resurrection morn ;
The lark sang loud o'er the springing corn ;
The dove was heard, and the hunter's horn.

viii.

The murderers stood close by on the way ;
Yet they saw nought save the lambs at play.

IX.

A trouble lurk'd in the King's strong eye
When the guest that he counted for dead drew
nigh.

He sate in state at his palace gate ;

His chiefs and his nobles were ranged around ;
The Druids like ravens smelt some far fate ;

Their eyes were gloomily bent on the ground.
Then spake Laeghaire : " He comes—beware !
" Let none salute him, or rise from his chair !"

X.

Like some still vision men see by night,

Mitred, with eyes of serene command,
Saint Patrick moved onward in ghostly white .

The staff of Jesus was in his hand.
His priests paced after him unafraid,
And the boy, Benignus, more like a maid ;
Like a maid just wedded he walked and smiled,
To Christ new-plighted, that priestly child.

XI.

They enter'd the circle ; their hymn they ceased ;

The Druids their eyes bent earthward still :
On Patrick's brow the glory increased,
As a sunrise brightening some breathless hill.

The warriors sat silent : strange awe they felt ;—
The Chief Bard, Dubtach, rose up, and knelt !

XII.

'Then Patrick discoursed of the things to be
When time gives way to eternity,
Of kingdoms that cease, which are dreams not
things,
And the Kingdom built by the King of kings.
Of Him he spake who reigns from the Cross ;
Of the death which is life, and the life which is
loss ;
And how all things were made by the Infant
Lord,
And the small hand the Magian kings adored.
His voice sounded on like a throbbing flood
That swells all night from some far-off wood,
And when it was ended—that wondrous strain—
Invisible myriads breathed, “Amen!”

XIII.

While he spake, men say that the reflux tide
On the shore beside Colpa ceased to sink ;
And they say the white deer by Mulla's side
O'er the green marge bending forebore to drink :
'That the Brandon eagle forgot to soar :
That no leaf stirr'd in the wood by Lee :

A trance there hung the island o'er,
 For none might guess what the end would be.

XIV.

Then whisper'd the king to a chief close by
 "It were better for me to believe than die!"

XV.

Yet the King believed not : but ordinance gave*
 That whoso would might believe that word :
 So the meek believed, and the wise, and brave,
 And Mary's Son as their God adored.
 Ethnea and Fethlinea, his daughters twain,
 That day were in baptism born again ;
 And the Druids, because they could answer nought,
 Bow'd down to the faith the stranger brought.

* Very different was the reception which the Saint met from Aengus, King of Munster. He invited St. Patrick to his royal seat at Cashel, and there received his instructions. At his baptism, as the King stood barefooted, "St. Patrick striking the end of his Episcopal staff, that was defended with a spike of iron, with some vehemence, it pierced by chance through the foot of the King, which put him into great disorder ; but notwithstanding the pain he suffered, and the abundance of blood which flowed from his wound, he had that regard for the religion into which he was baptized, that he would not stir from the place till the solemnity of the office was finished."—KEATING'S *Hist. of Ireland*, p. 337. Duffy, 1861.

That day upon Erin God pour'd His Spirit,—
 Yet none like the chief of the bards had merit,
 Dubtach!—He rose and believed the first,
 Ere the great light yet on the rest had burst.

It was thus that Erin, then blind but strong,
 To Christ through her bard paid homage due :
 And this was a sign that in Erin Song
 Should from first to last to the cross be true!

A BARD SONG.

I.

TWAS a holy time when the kings, long
 foemen,*
 Fought, side by side, to uplift the serf ;
 Never triumph'd in old time Greek or Roman
 As Brian and Malachi at Clontarf.
 There was peace in Eire for long years after :

* Malachi, who fought under the great Brian Boróimhe at Clontarf, where the Danish power in Ireland was overthrown for ever, had himself been King of all Ireland, but allowed himself to be deposed, A.D. 1003, and his rival to be elevated in his place. Such disinterestedness is perhaps the noblest form in which true patriotism can shew itself.

Canute in England reign'd and Sweyn ;
But Eire found rest, and the freeman's laughter
Rang out the knell of the vanquished Dane.

II.

Praise to the king of ninety years
Who rode round the battle-field, cross in hand !
But the blessing of Eire and grateful tears
To the king who fought under Brian's com-
mand !
A crown in heaven for the king who brake,
To staunch old discords, his royal wand :
Who spurned his throne for his people's sake,
Who served a rival and saved the land !

KING LAEGHAIRE AND ST. PATRICK

The following statement is extracted by Dr. Petrie in his History and Antiquities of Tara Hill, from the Annotations of the Life of St. Patrick, by Tirechan:—
 “And Patrick repaired again to the City of Tara to
 “Laeghaire the son of Nial, because he (the King) had
 “ratified a league with him that he should not be slain
 “in his kingdom;—but he could not believe, saying
 “‘Nial, my father, did not permit me to believe, but
 “‘that I should be interred in the top of Tara, like men
 “‘standing up in war. For the Pagans are accustomed
 “‘to be buried armed, with their weapons ready, faced
 “‘to face, to the Day of Erdathe, among the Magi, *i. e.*
 “‘the Day of Judgment of the Lord.’”

THUS sang to the princes the bard Maelmire;
 But the princes received not the words he
 said:

There was ever great feud and great hate in Eire
 Yet O'Donnell wept when O'Neill was dead.

I.

‘Thou son of Calphurn, in peace go forth!

“This hand shall slay them, whoe’er would slay
 thee!

“The carles shall stand to their necks in earth,
 “Till they die of thirst, who mock or stay thee!

II.

“But my father, Nial, who is dead long since,
 “Permits not me to believe thy word;
 “For the servants of Jesus, thy heavenly Prince,
 “Once dead, lie flat as in sleep, interr’d;
 “But we are as men through floods that wade;—
 “We stand in our black graves undismay’d;
 “Our faces are turn’d to the race abhorr’d,
 “And ready beside us stand spear and sword,
 “Ready to strike at the last great day,
 “Ready to trample them back into clay.

III.

“This is my realm and men call it Eire,
 “Wherein I have lived and live in hate
 “(Like Nial before me and Ere his sire)
 “Of the race Lagenian, ill-named the Great!”

IV.

Thus spake Laeghaire, and his host rush’d on,
 A river of blood as yet unshed:—
 At noon they fought: and at set of sun
 That king lay captive, that host lay dead.

V.

The brave foe loosed him, but bade him swear
He would never demand of them Tribute more :
So Laeghaire by the dread God-elements swore,
By the moon divine and the earth and air ;
He swore by the wind and the broad sunshine
That circle for ever both land and sea,
By the long-back'd rivers, and mighty wine,
By the cloud far-seeing, by herb and tree,
By the boon spring shower, and by autumn's fan,
By woman's breast, and the head of man,
By night and the noonday Demon he swore
He would claim the Boarian Tribute no more.

VI.

But with years wrath wax'd ; and he brake his
faith ;—
Then the dread God-elements wrought his death ;
For the wind and sunshine by Cassi's side
Came down and smote on his head that he died.
Death-sick three days on his throne he sate :
Then he died, as his father died, great in hate.

VII.

They buried the king upon Tara's hill,
In his grave upright ;—there stands he still :
Upright there stands he as men that wade
By night through a castle-moat undismay'd ;

On his head is the crown, the spear in his hand,
And he looks to the hated Lagenian land.

VIII.

Patrick the Apostle, the son of Calphurn,
Such Rites rebuked :—let them be no longer !
And Eire he commanded this song to learn,
“ Though hate is strong yet love is stronger ! ”
To the Gaels of Eire he gave a Creed :
He bade them not fear Fate, Demon, or Faery ;
But to fast in Lent, and by no black deed
To insult God’s Son, and his mother, Mary.

Thus sang to the princes the bard Maelmire :—
Oh ! when will it leave me, that widows’ wail ?
There is fire in my heart ; but a fiercer fire
Went up from thy roofs and thy woods, I mayle !

PATRICK AND THE KNIGHT;
OR, THE INAUGURATION OF IRISH CHIVALRY.

I.

“**T**HOU shalt not be a priest,” he said ;*
 “ Christ hath for thee a lowlier task :
 “ Be thou His soldier ! Wear with dread
 “ His cross upon thy shield and casque !
 “ Put on God’s armour, faithful knight !
 “ Mercy with justice, love with law ;
 “ Nor e’er except for truth and right
 “ This sword cross-hilted dare to draw.”

II.

He spake, and with his crosier pointed
 Graved on the broad shield’s brazen boss
 (That hour baptized, confirmed, anointed
 Stood Erin’s chivalry) the Cross :

* Conall Creevan, a brother of Laeghaire, King of Ireland, was one of St. Patrick’s earliest converts. He asked permission to become a Priest, but the Saint commanded him to remain a soldier. The shield marked with the sign of the Cross was ever after called “Sciath-Bachlach,” or the Shield of the Crosier. This is stated by Dr. O’Donovan to be the earliest authentic notice found of armorial bearings in Ireland.

And there was heard a whisper low—

Saint Michael was that whisper thine?

“Thou Sword, keep pure thy virgin vow,

“And trenchant shalt thou be as mine.”

THE BIER THAT CONQUERED;

OR, O'DONNELL'S ANSWER.

A.D. 1257.

Maurice Fitz Gerald, Lord Justice, marched to the north-west, and a furious battle was fought between him and Godfrey O'Donnell, Prince of Tirconnell, at Creadran-Killa, north of Sligo, A.D. 1257. The two leaders met in single combat and severely wounded each other. It was of the wound he then received that O'Donnell died, after triumphantly defeating his great rival in Ulster, O'Neill. The latter, hearing that O'Donnell was dying, demanded hostages from the Kinel Connell. The messengers who brought this insolent message fled in terror the moment they had delivered it;—and the answer to it was brought by O'Donnell on his bier. Maurice Fitz Gerald finally retired to the Franciscan monastery, which he had founded at Youghal, and died peacefully in the habit of that order.

L AND which the Norman would make his own
 (Thus sang the Bard 'mid a host o'erthrown)
 While their white cheeks some on the clench'd
 hand propp'd,

And from some the life-blood scarce he eded
dropp'd,

There are men in thee that refuse to die,
And that scorn to live, while a foe stands nigh !

I.

O'Donnell lay sick with a grievous wound :

The leech had left him ; the priest had come ;
The clan sat weeping upon the ground,
Their banners furl'd, and their minstrels dumb.

II.

Then spake O'Donnell, the king : “ Although
“ My hour draws nigh, and my dolours grow ;
“ And although my sins I have now confess'd,
“ And desire in the land, my charge, to rest,
“ Yet leave this realm, nor will I nor can,
“ While a stranger treads on her, child or man.

III.

“ I will languish no longer a sick man here :
“ My bed is grievous ; build up my Bier.
“ The white robe a king wears over me throw ;
“ Bear me forth to the field where he camps—
 “ your foe,
“ With the yellow torches and dirges low.
“ The heralds his challenge have brought and fled ;
“ The answer they bore not I bear instead.

“My people shall fight my pain in sight,
“And I shall sleep well when their wrong stands
“right.”

IV

Then the clan to the words of their Chief gave
ear,
And they fell'd great oak-trees and built a bier ;
Its plumes from the eagle's wing were shed,
And the wine-black samite above it they spread
Inwoven with sad emblems and texts divine,
And the braided bud of Tirconnell's pine,
And all that is meet for the great and brave
When past are the measured years God gave,
And a voice cries “Come” from the waiting
grave.

V.

When the Bier was ready they laid him thereon ;
And the army forth bare him with wail and
moan :
With wail by the sea-lakes and rock abysses ;
With moan through the vapour-trail'd wilder-
nesses ;
And men sore wounded themselves drew nigh
And said, “ We will go with our king and die ;”
And women wept as the pomp pass'd by.
The yellow torches far off were seen ;
No war-note peal'd through the gorges green ;
But the black pines echo'd the mourners' keen.

VI.

What said the Invader, that pomp in sight?
“ They sue for the pity they shall not win.”
But the sick king sat on the Bier upright,
And said, “ So well! I shall sleep to-night:—
“ Rest here my couch, and my peace begin.”

VII.

Then the war-cry sounded—“ Lamb-dearg Aboo!”
And the whole clan rush’d to the battle plain:
They were thrice driven back, but they closed
anew
That an end might come to their king’s great
pain.
’Twas a nation not army that onward rush’d,
’Twas a nation’s blood from their wounds that
gush’d:
Bare-bosom’d they fought, and with joy were slain;
Till evening their blood fell fast like rain;
But a shout swell’d up o’er the setting sun,
And O’Donnell died for the field was won.

So they buried their king upon Aileach’s shore;
And in peace he slept;—O’Donnell More.

PECCATUM PECCAVIT.

I.

WHERE is thy brother? Heremon, speak!
Heber the son of Milesius, where?
The orphans' wail and their mother's shriek
For ever they ring upon Banba's air!
And whose, O whose was the sword, Heremon,
That smote Amergin, thy brother and bard?
'Twas the Fate of thy house or a mocking Demon
That raised thy hand o'er his forehead scarr'd!

II.

Woe, woe to Banba! That blood of brothers
Wells up from her bosom renewed each year;
'Twas her's the shriek—that desolate mother's:—
'Twas Banba wept o'er that first red bier!
The priest has warn'd, and the bard lamented:
But warning and wailing her sons despised;
The head was sage, and the heart half-sainted;
But the sword-hand was evermore unbaptized! *

* Between the brothers who founded the great Milesian, or Gaelic dynasty in Ireland, about B.C. 760, there was strife, as between the brothers who founded Rome.

THE DAYS OF OUTLAWRY.

I.

A CRY comes up from wood and wold,
A wail from fen and marish.
“Grant us your laws, and take our gold;
“Like beasts dog-chased we perish.”—
The hunters of their kind reply,
“Our sports we scorn to barter;
“We rule! the Irish enemy
“Partakes not England’s charter.”

II.

A cry comes up for ever new,
A wail of hopeless anguish,

Heremon and Heber divided Ireland between them. A dispute having arisen between them, a battle was fought at Geashill, in the present King’s County, in which Heber fell by his brother’s hand. This may be called Ireland’s “original sin,” the typical fount of many woes. In the second year of his reign Heremon also slew his brother, Amergin, in battle. To Amergin no territory was assigned. He is said to have constructed the causeway or *tochar* of Inver Mor, at the mouth of the Ovoca in Wicklow.

“ Your laws, your laws !—our laws ye slew :

“ In living death we languish.”—

“ Not so ! We keep our hunting ground ;

“ We chase the flying quarry.

“ Hark, hark, that sound ! the horn and hound !

“ Away ! we may not tarry !”

III.

For Scotland England's king with glee

Forsakes his court and palace.

O Erin, if that hour in thee

A Bruce had risen—a Wallace !

For conquests new King Edward burns

In Scotland's farthest highland ;

The forest lord the offal spurns,

Of one subjected island !

IV.

Sad isle thy laws are Norman lords*

That, dower'd by Henry's bounty,

On cities sup 'mid famish'd hordes,

And dine on half a county !

* In the reign of Edward the First those Irish, who lay contiguous to the county lands, finding themselves in a position of utter outlawry, the ancient Brehon Law of Ireland not being recognized by England, and English law not being extended to them, applied to the King for the protection of the latter. The incident is thus narrated by Plowden in his History of Ireland:—

A laughing Giant, Outlawry
 Strides drunk o'er hill and heather ;
 Justice to him is as a fly
 'Twixt mail'd hands clash'd together.

v.

O memory, memory, leave the graves
 Knee-deep in grass and darnel !
 Wash from a kingdom, winds and waves,
 The odour of the charnel !
 Be dumb, red graves in valleys deep,
 Black towers on plains blood-sloken :—
 Dark-fields, your thrilling secrets keep,
 Nor speak till God hath spoken !

“ They consequently offered, through Ufford, the chief
 “ Governor, 8000 marks to the King, provided he would
 “ grant the free enjoyment of the laws of England to the
 “ whole body of Irish natives indiscriminately.” Edward
 was disposed to accept the offer, but in the words of
 Plowden :—“ These politic and benevolent intentions of
 “ Edward were thwarted by his servants, who, to for-
 “ ward their own rapacious views of extortion and op-
 “ pression, prevented a convention of the King's barons
 “ and other subjects in Ireland. * * * The cry of op-
 “ pression was not silenced ; the application of the Irish
 “ was renewed, and the King repeatedly solicited to
 “ accept them as free and faithful subjects.”

THE DIRGE OF ATHUNREE.

A. D. 1316.

This great battle marked an epoch in Irish history. In it the Norman power at last triumphed over that of the Gael, which had long been enfeebled by the divisions in the royal house of O'Connor. From this period also the Norman Barons more rapidly than before became Irish Chiefs. As such they were accepted by Ireland. The power of the English Crown, on the other hand, gradually declined till it became unknown beyond the narrow limits of a part of the Pale. It rose again after the accession of Henry VII.

I.

ATHUNREE! Athunree!
 Erin's heart, it broke on thee!
 Ne'er till then in all its woe
 Did that heart its hope forego.
 Save a little child—but one—
 The latest regal race is gone.
 Roderick died again on thee,
 Athunree!

II.

Athunree! Athunree!
 A hundred years and forty-three
 Winter-wing'd and black as night
 O'er the land had track'd their flight:

In Clonmacnoise from earthly bed
Roderick raised once more his head :—
Fedlim floodlike rush'd to thee,
Athunree !

III.

Athunree ! Athunree !
The light that struggled sank on thee !
Ne'er since Cathall the red-handed
Such a host till then was banded.
Long-hair'd Kerne and Galloglass
Met the Norman face to face ;
The saffron standard floated far
O'er the on-rolling wave of war ;
Bards the onset sang o'er thee,
Athunree !

IV.

Athunree ! Athunree !
The poison tree took root in thee !
What might naked breasts avail
'Gainst sharp spear and steel-ribb'd mail ?
Of our Princes twenty-nine,
Bulwarks fair of Connor's line,
Of our clansmen thousands ten
Slept on thy red ridges. Then—
Then the night, came down on thee,
Athunree !

V.

Athunree! Athunree!
Strangely shone that moon on thee!
Like the lamp of them that tread
Staggering o'er the heaps of dead,
Seeking that they fear to see.
Oh that widows' wailing sore!
On it rang to Oranmore;
Died, they say, among the piles
That make holy Aran's isles;—
It was Erin wept on thee,
Athunree!

VI.

Athunree! Athunree!
The heart of Erin burst on thee!
Since that hour some unseen hand
On her forehead stamps the brand:
Her children ate that hour the fruit
That slays manhood at the root;
Our warriors are not what they were;
Our maids no more are blithe and fair;
Truth and Honour died with thee,
Athunree!

VII.

Athunree! Athunree!
Never harvest wave o'er thee!
Never sweetly-breathing kine
Pant o'er golden meads of thine!

Barren be thou as the tomb ;
 May the night-bird haunt thy gloom,
 And the wailer from the sea,
 Athunree !

VIII.

Athunree ! Athunree !
 All my heart is sore for thee,
 It was Erin died on thee,
 Athunree !

LAMENT FOR EDWARD BRUCE.

I.

HE is dead, dead, dead !—
 The man to Erin dear !
 The king who gave our Isle a head—
 His kingdom is his bier.
 He rode into our war ;
 And we crown'd him chief and prince,
 For his race to Alba's shore
 Sailed from Erin, ages since.
 Woe, woe, woe !
 Edward Bruce is cold to-day ;
 He that slew him lies as low,
 Sword to sword and clay to clay.

II.

King Robert came too late !—

Long, long may Erin mourn !

Famine's rage and dreadful Fate

Forbade her Bannockburn !

As the galley touch'd the strand

Came the messenger of woe ;

The king put back the herald's hand—

“Peace,” he said, “thy tale I know !

“His face was in the cloud ;

“And his wraith was on the surge.”—

Maids of Alba, weave his shroud !

Maids of Erin sing his dirge !*

* The time when Ireland seems to have been most near to becoming once more an independent kingdom was A.D. 1315. The Irish Princes offered the throne to Edward Bruce, who was descended, in the female line, from those kings of Irish race who had so long ruled over Scotland. He arrived in Ireland with an army of 6000 men, landing at Larne, and on being joined by the Irish Chiefs, marched nearly round the whole island, defeating the Lord Justice, Butler, and, subsequently, Sir Roger Mortimer, who encountered him with 15,000 men. In 1317 he crossed the Boyne, accompanied by his great brother, Robert Bruce, at the head of 20,000 men, and marched as far as Limerick. A terrible famine and pestilence prevented his doing more, and his brother returned to Scotland. The next year, Oct. 14, he encountered, at Faughard, the army levied by the

SPES UNICA.

I.

BETWEEN two mountains' granite walls one
star

Shines in this sea-lake quiet as the grave ;
The ocean moans against its rocky bar ;
That star no reflex finds in foam or wave.

II.

Saints of our country : if—no more a Nation—
Vain are henceforth her struggles, from on high
Fix in the bosom of her desolation
So much the more that hope which cannot die !

Norman nobles, and commanded by Bermingham. In the beginning of the battle an Anglo-Irish Knight, John Maupas, rushed through a host of foes, and engaged in single combat with Edward Bruce. Both warriors fell ; and the body of one was found lying on that of the other.

ODE.

I.

THE unvanquish'd land puts forth each year
New growth of man and forest ;
Her children vanish ; but on her
Stranger, in vain thou warrest !
She wrestles, strong through hope sublime,
(Thick darkness round her pressing)
Wrestles with God's great Angel, Time—
And wins, though main'd, the blessing.

II.

As night draws in what day sent forth,
As Spring is born of Winter,
As flowers that hide in parent earth
Re-issue from the centre,
Our land takes back her wasted brood,
Our land, in respiration,
Breathes from her deep heart unsubdued
A renovated nation !

III.

Man's mortal frame, for heaven design'd,
In caves of earth must wither ;

Of all its myriad atoms join'd
No twain may cleave together.
Our land is dead. Upon the blast
Far forth her dust is driven;
But the glorified shape shall be hers at last,
And the crown that descends from heaven !

IV.

Her children die ; the nation lives :—
Through signs celestial ranging
The nation's Destiny still survives
Unchanged, yet ever changing.
The many-centuried Wrath goes by ;
But while earth's tumult rages
“ In Cœlo quies.” Burst and die
Thou storm of temporal ages !

V.

Burst, and thine utmost fury wreak
On things that are but seeming !
First kill ; then die ; that God may speak,
And man surcease from dreaming !
That Love and Justice strong as love
May be the poles unshaken
Round which a world new-born may move
And Truth that slept may waken !

THE WEDDING OF THE CLANS ;

A GIRL'S BABBLE.

I GO to knit two clans together ;
Our clan and this clan unseen of yore :—
Our clan fears nought ! but I go, O whither ?
This day I go from my mother's door.

Thou redbreast sing'st the old song over,
Though many a time thou hast sung it before ;
They never sent thee to some strange new lover :—
I sing a new song by my mother's door.

I stepp'd from my little room down by the ladder,
The ladder that never so shook before ;
I was sad last night ; to-day I am sadder,
Because I go from my mother's door.

The last snow melts upon bush and bramble ;
The gold bars shine on the forest's floor ;
Shake not, thou leaf ! it is I must tremble
Because I go from my mother's door.

From a Spanish sailor a dagger I bought me ;
I trail'd a rose-tree our grey bawn o'er ;

The creed and my letters our old bard taught
me ;

My days were sweet by my mother's door.

My little white goat that with raised feet huggest
The oak stock, thy horns in the ivies froze,
Could I wrestle like thee—how the wreaths thou
tuggest!—

I never would move from my mother's door.

Oh weep no longer, my nurse and mother !

My foster-sister, weep not so sore !

You cannot come with me, Ir, my brother—

Alone I go from my mother's door.

Farewell, my wolf-hound, that slew Mac Owing

As he caught me and far through the thickets
bore :

My heifer, Alb, in the green vale lowing,

My eygnet's nest upon Lorna's shore !

He has kill'd ten chiefs, this chief that plights
me ;

His hand is like that of the giant Balor :

But I fear his kiss ; and his beard affrights me,

And the great stone dragon above his door.

Had I daughters nine with me they should tarry ;
They should sing old songs ; they should dance
at my door ;
They should grind at the quern ;—no need to
marry ;
Oh when will this marriage-day be o'er ?

Had I buried, like Moirin, three mates already
I might say, “ Three husbands ! then why not
four ? ”
But my hand is cold and my foot unsteady
Because I never was married before !

THE STATUTE OF KILKENNY.

The celebrated Statute of Kilkenny, passed A.D. 1362, is thus described by an English historian, Mr, Plowden:—"It was enacted that intermarriages with the
 "natives, or any connexion with them *as fosterers, or in*
 "*the way of gossipred*, should be punished as High Treason; that the use of their name, language, apparel,
 "or customs, should be punished with the forfeiture of
 "lands and tenements; that to submit to be governed
 "by the Brehon Laws was treason; that the English
 "should not make war upon the natives without the
 "permission and authority of Government; that the
 "English should not permit the Irish to graze upon
 "their lands; that they should not admit them to any
 "benefice or religious privilege, or even entertain their
 "Bards."

OF old ye warr'd on men : to-day
 On women and on babes ye war ;
 The Noble's child his head must lay
 Beneath the peasant's roof no more !

I saw in sleep the Infant's hand
 His foster-brother's fiercely grasp ;
 His warm arm, lithe as willow wand,
 Twines me each day with closer clasp !

Oh infant smiler ! grief beguiler !

Between the oppressor and the oppress'd
Oh soft, unconscious reconciler,
Smile on ! through thee the land is bless'd.

Through thee the puissant love the poor ;
His conqueror's hope the vanquish'd shares :
For thy sake by a lowly door
The clan made vassal stops and stares.

Our vales are healthy. On thy cheek
There dawns, each day, a livelier red :
Smile on ! Before another week
Thy feet our earthen floor will tread !

Thy foster-brothers twain for thee
Would face the wolves on snowy fell :
Smile on ! the Irish Enemy
Will fence their Norman nursling well.

The nursling as the child is dear ;—
Thy mother loves not like thy nurse !
That babbling Mandate steps not near
Thy cot but o'er her bleeding corse !

THE KING.

A BARD SONG.

A.D. 1399.

HE came in the night on a false pretence ;
As a friend he came ; as a lord remains :
His coming we noted not—when—or whence ;
We slept : we woke in chains.
Ere a year they had chased us to dens and caves ;
Our streets and our churches lay drown'd in
blood ;
The race that had sold us their sons as slaves
In our land our conquerors stood !

II.

Who were they, those princes that gave away
What was theirs to keep not theirs to give ?
A king holds sway for a passing day ;
The kingdoms for ever live !
The tanist succeeds when the king is dust :*
The king rules all ; yet the king hath nought :

* According to the Irish law the king, far from being able to alienate his kingdom, had but a life interest in

They were traitors not kings who sold their trust ;
They were traitors not kings who bought !

III.

Brave Art Mac Murrough !—Arise, 'tis morn !

For a true king the nation waited long,

He is strong as the horn of the unicorn,

This true king who rights our wrong !

He rules in the fight by an inward right ;

From the heart of the nation her king is grown ;

He rules by right ; he is might of her might ;

Her flesh, and bone of her bone !

the sovereignty. His son did not by necessity succeed to the crown. The sovereignty was vested in a particular family as representing the clan or race. Within certain limits of kindred in that family the king succeeded by election : and at the same period his Tanist, or successor, was chosen also. Such was the immemorial usage ; and the transactions by which Irish princes occasionally pretended to transfer their rights to a foreign power were traitorous proceedings on the part of both the sides concerned in them. These frauds were concealed from the Irish, and the elections to the sovereignty went on as before, until some occasion rose supposed to be favourable for the assertion of the foreign claim.

•QUEEN MARGARET'S FEASTING.

A.D. 1451.

A singularly picturesque narrative of this event is given in an old Irish Chronicle translated by Duaid Mac Ferbis, one of Ireland's "chief bards," for Sir James Ware, in the year 1666, and republished in the *Miscellany of the Irish Archæological Society*, vol. i. 1846. The chronicle thus concludes: "God's blessing, the "blessing of all the saints, and every one, blessing "from Jerusalem to Inis Glaaire, be on her going to "heaven; and blessed be he who will reade and heare "this for blessing her soul: and cursed be that sore in "her breast that killed Margaret."

I.

FAIR she stood—God's queenly creature!
 Wondrous joy was in her face;
 Of her ladies none in stature
 Like to her, and none in grace.
 On the church-roof stood they round her,
 Cloth of gold was her attire;
 They in jewell'd circle wound her;—
 Beside her Ely's king, her sire.

II.

Far and near the green fields glitter'd
 Like to poppy-beds in Spring,

Gay with companies loose-scatter'd
Seated each in seemly ring.
Under banners red or yellow :
There all day the feast they kept
From chill dawn and noontide mellow
Till the hill-shades eastward crept.

III.

On a white steed at the gateway
Margaret's husband, Calwagh, sate :
Guest on guest, approaching, straightway
Welcomed he with love and state.
Each pass'd on with largess laden,
Chosen gifts of thought and work,
Now the red cloak of the maiden,
Now the minstrel's golden torque.

IV.

On the wind the tapestries shifted ;
From the blue hills rang the horn ;
Slowly toward the sunset drifted
Choral song and shout breeze-borne.
Like a sea the crowds unresting
Murmur'd round the grey church-tower ;
Many a prayer amid the feasting,
For Margaret's mother rose that hour !

V.

On the church-roof kerne and noble
At her bright face look'd, half dazed ;

Nought was hers of shame or trouble ;—
On the crowds far off she gazed :
Once, on heaven her dark eyes bending,
Her hands in prayer she flung apart :
Unconsciously her arms extending
She bless'd her people in her heart.

VI.

Thus a Gaelic queen and nation
At Imayn till set of sun
Kept with feast the Annunciation,
Fourteen hundred fifty-one.
Time it was of solace tender ;—
'Twas a brave time, strong yet fair !
Blessing, O ye angels, send her
From Salem's towers, and Inisglair !

THE BALLAD OF "BONNY PORTMORE;"*

OR, THE NIGHT SURPRISE.

I.

SHALL I breathe it? Hush! 'twas dark!
Silence!—few could understand:—

Needful deeds are done—not told.

In your ear a whisper! Hark!

'Twas a sworn, unwavering band

Marching through the midnight cold;

Rang the frost plain, stiff and stark:

By us, blind, the river rolled.

II.

Silence! we were silent then:

Shall we boast and brag to day?

Just deeds, blabbed, have found their price!

Snow made dumb the trusty glen;

Now and then a starry ray

Shewed the floating rafts of ice:

Worked our oath in heart and brain:

Twice we halted:—only twice.

* One of the most beautiful and impassioned of the old Irish airs bears this name.

III.

When we reached the city wall
On their posts the Warders slept :
By the moat the rushes plained :
Hush ! I tell you part, not all !
Through the water-weeds we crept ;
Soon the sleepers' tower was gained.
My sister's son a tear let fall—
Righteous deeds by tears are stained.

IV.

Round us lay a sleeping city :
Had they wakened we had died :
Innocence sleeps well, they say.
Pirates, traitors, base banditti,
Blood upon their hands undried,
'Mid their spoils asleep they lay !
Murderers ! Justice murders pity !
Night had brought their Judgment Day !

V.

In the castle, here and there,
'Twixt us and the dawning East
Flashed a light, or sank by fits :
“ Patience, brothers ! sin it were
“ Lords to startle at their feast,
“ Or to scare the dancers' wits !”
Patient long in forest lair
The listening, fire-eyed Tiger sits !

VI.

Oh, the loud flames upward springing !
Oh, that first fierce yell within,
And, without, that stormy laughter !
Like rooks across a sunset winging
Dark they dashed through glare and din
Under rain of beam and rafter !
Oh, that death-shriek heavenward ringing ;
Oh, that wondrous silence after !

The fire-glare shewed, 'mid glaze and blister,
A boy's cheek wet with tears. 'Twas base !
That boy was first-born of my sister ;
Yet I smote him on the face !

Ah ! but when the poplars quiver
In the hot noon, cold o'er head,
Sometimes with a spasm I shiver ;
Sometimes round me gaze with dread.

Ah ! and when the silver willow
Whitens in the moonlight gale,
From my hectic, grassy pillow
I hear, sometimes, that infant's wail !

PEACE.

SERAPH that from the blue abyss
O'erlook'st the storms round earth that roll,
While we, by fragments wildered, miss,
The dread perfection of the whole ;

Draw near at last ! a moment lean
Upon that earth's tumultuous breast
Thy hand, heart-healing and serene,
And grant the fevered planet rest !

THE IRISH NORMAN ;

OR, LAMENT FOR THE BARON OF LOUGHMOE.*

I.

WHO shall sing the Baron's dirge ?
Not the corded Brethren hooded
With the earth-hued cloak and cowl :—
Mid the black church mourner-crowded,
While the night-winds round it howl,
Let them, in the chancel kneeling,

* A noble piece of Irish music bears this name, and the date A.D. 1507.

Lift the hymns to God appealing :
Let them scare the powers of evil,
Striking dumb the accusing Devil :
Let them angel-fence the Soul
That flies forward to its goal :
Prayer can quicken : Fire can purge :
Yet they shall not sing his dirge !

II.

Who shall sing the Baron's dirge ?
Not the ceremonial weepers
Blackening o'er the place of tombs :
Though their cry might wake the sleepers
In the dark that wait their dooms ;
Though their dreadful ululation
Sounds the death-note of a nation ;
Though the far off listeners shiver,
(Wave-tossed seamen, weary reapers)
Shiver like to funeral plumes,
While the long wail like a river
Rolls beyond the horizon's verge ;
Yet they shall not sing his dirge !

III.

Who shall sing the Baron's dirge ?
Not the minstrels of his presence,
Harpers of his halls and towers :
Let them, 'mid the bowery pleasance,
Sing that flower among the flowers,

Female beauty :—swift its race is
As the smiles on infant faces !
Oh, ye conquering years and hours !
Children that together played
Love and wed, and then are laid

Grey-haired beneath the yew-tree bowers,
Passing gleams in glooms that merge—
Yet they shall not sing his dirge !

IV.

Who shall sing the Baron's dirge ?
Sing it castles that he wasted
Like to old oaks thunder-blasted,
Wasted with the sword or fire !
Sternness God with sweetness mateth,
Next to him that well createth
Is the just and brave Destroyer !
The man that sinned, the same must fall,
Though Peter by him stood and Paul !
They his clansmen, they his gleemen,
They that wear the garb of freemen
Wore the sackcloth, wore the serge :—
Let them sing the Baron's dirge.

V.

Who shall sing the Baron's dirge ?
Who so fain would sing it faileth,
Triumph so o'er grief prevaieth !
Double-fountained was his blood,

A Gaelic spring, a Norman flood!
To his bosom Truth he folded
With a youthful lover's zeal:
God's great Justice seemed he, moulded
In a statued shape of steel!
Men were liars; kerne and noble;
He consumed them like to stubble!
The orphan's shield, the traitor's scourge—
Sing, fierce winds, the Baron's dirge!

VI.

Who shall sing the Baron's dirge?—
Oh, thou dread, Almighty Will!
Man exulteth; woman plaineth;
But the Will Supreme ordaineth,
And the years its doom fulfil.
All our reason is unreason;
All our glory ends in woe:
Thou didst raise him for a season,
Thou once more hast laid him low!
But his strong life sought Thee ever;
Sought Thee like a mountain river
Lost at last in the sea-surge—
No! we will not sing his dirge!

VII.

Who shall sing the Baron's dirge?
'Twas no time of sobs or sighing:
Grave, yet glad, he lay a dying.

Heralds through the vales were sent
Bidding all men pray for grace
That he rightly might repent
Sins of his and all his race :
Well he worked ; three days his spirit
Throve in prayer and waxed in merit.
The blessed lights aloft were raised :
On the Cross his dim eyes gazed
To the last breath's ebb and gurge—
No ! for him we chaunt no dirge ! *

THE BALLAD OF TURGESIUS, THE DANE;

OR, THE GIRL DELIVERER.

THE people sat amid the dust and wept :
“ In darker days than these God burst the
chain,”
(Thus sang the minstrel as the chords he swept)
“ Hear of the Girl deliverer and the Dane.”

PART I.

Twin ivy wreaths her forehead wound,
A green wreath and a yellow :

* See page 68.

Her hair a gleaming dusk in ground
 With ends of sunshine mellow.

Fair rose her head the tall neck o'er ;
 Her neck in snows was bedded :
 Some crown, they swore, unseen she bore
 That queenly head which steadied.

Her sable vest in front was laced
 With laces red as coral,
 Her golden zone in jewels traced
 With leafy type and moral.

As treading hearts her small feet went
 In love-suspended fleetness :
 And hearts thus trodden forth had sent
 An organ-sob of sweetness.

Upon the dais when she stept
 Meath's peopled hall rang loudly :
 Their hundred harps the minstrels swept :
 Her sire looked round him proudly.

The Dane beside him, darkening, sate,
 At once his guest and victor ;
 Green Erin's scourge—the true king's Fate—
 The sceptred serf's protector.

“ Sir King ! our worship grows but small !
 “ Here, Gaels alone find honour :

“ A white girl cannot cross your hall
“ But all men gaze upon her !

“ My speech is short : yon stands my Fort !
“ Ere three nights thither send her
“ With twenty maidens of her court,
“ Your fairest, to attend her.”

PART II.

The Dane strides o'er his stony floor,
A strong, fierce man, yet hoary :
The low sun fires the purple moor
With mingled gloom and glory.

The tyrant stops ; he stares thereon :
Sun-touched, his armour flashes :
His rough grey hair a glow hath won
Like embers seen through ashes.

His mail'd hand grasps his tangled beard :
He laughs that red sun watching,
"Till the roofs laugh back like a forest weird
The laughter of Wood-Gods catching.

“ My sea-kings ! mark yon furnace-sheen !
“ The Fire-God is not thrifty !
“ No flame like that these eyes have seen
“ For winters five and fifty !

“ My sire lay dead : the ship sailed north
 “ The pyre and the corse on bearing :
 “ Six miles it sailed ; the flame sprang forth
 “ Like sea-vext Hecla glaring !

“ We'll pledge him to-night in the blood red
 wine :

“ 'Tis wrought, the task he set me !
 “ From coast to coast this isle is mine :
 “ Not soon will her sons forget me !

“ I have burned their shrines and their cities
 sacked ;

“ Their fair ones my castles cumber ;
 “ We were shamed to-night if the bevy lacked
 “ The fairest from their number.

“ Young wives for us all ; too many by half !
 “ Strange mates—the hind with the
 dragon !”

He laughed as when the reveller's laugh
 Rings back from the half-drained flagon.

PART III.

The girl has prayed at her mother's grave,
 And kissed that grave, and risen :
 She has hid a knife in a silken glaive :
 She is calm, but her great eyes glisten.

Between silk vest and spotless breast
A dagger she has hidden ;
With lips compressed gone forth, a guest
Unhonoured—not unbidden.

Through moonshine wan on moves she, on :
But who are those, the others ?
They are garbed like maids, but maids are
none :
They are lovers of maids, and brothers.

The gates lie wide : they enter in :
Loud roars the riot and wassail :
They hear at times 'mid the conquerors' din
The harp of the Gaelic vassal.

The Dane has laid on her head his hand
The love in his eye is cruel :
Out leap the swords of that well-masked
band :
Two nations have met in duel !

'Tis a holy war, without stain or blot :
'Tis a righteous doom—that slaughter :
His sea-kings lie drowned in the castle moat,
And the tyrant in Annin's water.

From mountain to mountain the tidings
 flashed :

It pealed from turret to turret :
Like a sunlit storm o'er the plains it dashed :
It hung o'er the vales like a spirit.

'Twas a maiden's honour that crowned the
 right :

'Twas a vestal claim, scarce noted
By the power which trampled it out of sight,
That rose on the wrong, and smote it !

The minstrel ceased: aloud the young men cried,
 " That maid is Erin ! Live, O maid, for ever !"
" Not Erin but her Faith," the old priests
 replied ;
" Her Faith—that only—shall the Land de-
 liver !"

Epilogue.

AT my casement I sat by night, while the wind
remote in dark valleys
Voluminous gather'd and grew, and waxing
swell'd to a gale :
An hour I heard it or more ere yet it sobb'd on
my lattice :
Far off, 'twas a People's moan ; hard by, but a
widow's wail.

To God there is fragment none ; nothing single ; no
isolation :
The ages to Him are one ; round Him the woe,
and the wrong
Roll like a spiritual star, and the cry of the deso-
late Nation :—
The Souls that are under the Altar respond in
music “ how long ?”

By the casement I sat alone till sign after sign
had descended :

The Hyads rejoin'd their sea, and the Pleiads
by fate were down borne :

And then with that distant dirge a tenderer
anthem was blended,

And, glad to behold her young, the bird gave
thanks to the morn.



INISFAIL ;
A LYRICAL CHRONICLE OF IRELAND.

PART II.

THE WARS OF RELIGION.



PART II.

Prologue.

A VOICE from the midnight call'd, " Arise, be
" alone, and remove thee ;
" Descend into valleys of bale, and look on the
" visions of night ;
" From the stranger flee, and be strange to the men
" and the women that love thee,
" That thy wine may be tears, and that ashes
" may mix with the meats of delight.
" To few is the Vision shown, and to none for his
" weal or from merit :
" As lepers they live who see it ; as those that
" men pity or hate :
" And to few is the Voice reveal'd ; yet to them
" who hear and can bear it
" Though bitterness cometh at first, yet sweet-
" ness cometh more late."

Then in vision I saw a Corse—death cold ; but the
angels had draped it
In light ; and the light it cast round the unseal'd
death-cave was strewn ;
And an anthem rush'd o'er the worlds ; but the
tongue that moulded and shaped it
Was a great storm through ruins borne ; and the
lips that spake it were stone.

PLORANS PLORAVIT.

A.D. 1583.

SHE sits alone on the cold grave stone
And only the dead are nigh her ;
In the tongue of the Gael she makes her wail :
The night wind rushes by her.

“ Few, O few are the leal and true,
“ And fewer shall be, and fewer ;
The land is a corse ; no life, no force :
“ O wind with sere leaves strew her !

“ Men ask what scope is left for hope
“ To one who has known her story :—
“ I trust her dead ! Their graves are red ;
“ But their souls are with God in glory.

ROISIN DUBH;*

OR, THE BLEEDING HEART.

I.

O WHO art thou with that queenly brow
And uncrown'd head?
And why is the vest that binds thy breast,
O'er the heart, blood-red?
Like a rose-bud in June was that spot at noon.
A rose-bud weak;
But it deepens and grows like a July rose:
Death-pale thy cheek!

II.

“ The babes I fed at my foot lay dead;
“ I saw them die:
“ In Ramah a blast went wailing past;
“ It was Rachel's cry.
“ But I stand sublime on the shores of Time,
“ And I pour mine odè,
“ As Myriam sang to the cymbals' clang,
“ On the wind to God.

* Roisin Dubh signifies the “Black little Rose,” and was one of the mystical names under which the bards celebrated Ireland.

III.

"Once more at my feasts my Bards and Priests
 "Shall sit and eat :
 "And the Shepherd whose sheep are on every
 steep
 "Shall bless my meat !
 "Oh, sweet, men say, is the song by day, .
 "And the feast by night ;
 "But on poisons I thrive, and in death survive
 "Through ghostly might."

DEEP CRIETH UNTO DEEP.

I.

BESIDE that Eastern sea—there first exalted
 Heaven-high—behold the Cross of Christ
 lies low !

Sad St. Sophia ! 'neath thy roofs gold-vaulted
 Who kneels this hour ? the blind and turban'd
 Foe !

II.

O Eire ! a sister hast thou in thy sorrow !
 If thine the earlier, hers the bitterer moan :
 She weeps to-day ; great Rome may weep to-
 morrow !
 Claim not that o'er-proud boast—to weep alone.

WAR-SONG OF MAC CARTHY.

I.

TWO lives of an eagle, the old song saith,
Make the life of a black yew-tree ;
For two lives of a yew-tree the furrow's path
Men trace, grass-grown on the lea ;
Two furrows they last till the time is past
God willeth the world to be ;
For a furrow's time has Mac Carthy stood fast,
Mac Carthy in Carbery.

II.

Up with the banner whose green shall live
While lives the green on the oak !
And down with the axes that grind and rive
Keen-edged as the thunder stroke !
And on with the battle-cry known of old,
And the clan-rush like wind and wave ;
On, on ! the Invader is bought and sold ;
His own hand has dug his grave !

FLORENCE MAC CARTHY'S FAREWELL TO HIS ENGLISH LOVE.*

I.

MY pensive-brow'd Evangeline !
What says to thee old Windsor's pine
Whose shadow o'er the pleasance sways ?
It says, " Ere long the evening star
" Will pierce my darkness from afar :
" I grieve as one with grief who plays."

* There is a striking description of Florence Mac Carthy in the *Pacata Hibernia*. He "was contented "*(tandem aliquando)* to repaire to the president, lying at " Moyallo, bringing some fourty horse in his company ; " and himself in the middest of his troops (like the great " Turke among his Janissaries) drew towards the house, " the nine and twentieth of October, like Saul, higher by " the head and shoulders than any of his followers."—P. 170. Before the period he describes Florence had been for eleven years detained a prisoner in England, where he acquired the extraordinary knowledge and accomplishments which rendered his enterprise and military talents so formidable. In 1601 he was entrapped into a conference while furnished with the " Queen's protection," and sent to the Tower—where he passed the rest of his life.

II.

Evangeline ! Evangeline !
In that far distant land of mine
There stands a yew-tree among tombs !
For ages there that tree has stood,
A black pall dash'd with drops of blood ;
O'er all my world it breathes its glooms.

III.

England's fair child, Evangeline !
Because my yew-tree is not thine,
Because thy Gods on mine wage war,
Farewell ! Back fall the gates of brass ;
The exile to his own must pass :
I seek the land of tombs once more.

TO THE SAME.

WE seem to tread the self-same street,
To pace the self-same courts or grass ;
Parting, our hands appear to meet :
O vanitatum vanitas !

Distant as earth from heaven or hell
From thee the things to me most dear :
Ghost-throng'd Cocytus and thy will
Between us rush. We might be near.

Thy world is fair : my thoughts refuse
To dance its dance or drink its wine ;
Nor canst thou hear the reeds and yews
That sigh to me from lands not thine.

THE DIRGE OF KILDARE.

A.D. 1595.

The North wind clanged on the sharp hill-side :
The mountain muttered : the cloud replied ;
“ There is one rides up through thy woods,
Tyrone !
“ That shall ride on a bier of the pine branch
down.”

The flood roars over Danara's bed :
’Twas green at morning : to-night ’tis red :
What whispers the raven to oak and cave ?
“ Make ready the bier and make ready the grave.”

Kildare, Kildare ! Thou hast left the bound
Of hawk and heron, of hart and hound ;
With the hunters art come to the Lion's lair :
He is mighty of limb and old. Beware !

Beware, for on thee that eye is set
Which looked upon Norreys at Clontibret :
And that hand is lifted, from horse to heath
Which hurled the giant they mourn in Meath !*

Kildare, Kildare ! There are twain this hour
With brows turned north from Maynooth's grey
tower :

The mother sees nought : the bride shall see
The Herald and Death-flag far off—not thee.

* Segrave. The battle of Clontibret was fought in 1595. O'Neill commanded the victorious Irish force, as he did likewise at Battleford. In the latter battle the invading army, under Lord de Burgh, sustained a great defeat. The Earl of Kildare was among those who fell. His two foster-brothers rushed before him, to save him, but perished at his feet.

WAR-SONG OF TIRCONNELL'S BARD AT THE BATTLE OF BLACKWATER.

A.D. 1597.

At this battle the Irish of Ulster were commanded by "Red Hugh" O'Neill, Prince of Tirone, and by Hugh O'Donnell (called also "Red Hugh"), Prince of Tirconnell. Queen Elizabeth's army was led by Marshal Bagnal, who fell in the rout with 2,500 of the invading force. Twelve thousand gold pieces, thirty-four standards, and all the artillery of the vanquished army were taken.

I.

GLORY to God, and to the Powers that fight
For Freedom and the Right!
We have them then, the Invaders! There they
stand

Once more on Oriel's land!
They have pass'd the gorge stream-cloven,
And the mountain's purple bound;
Now the toils are round them woven,
Now the nets are spread around!
Give them time: their steeds are blown;—
Let them stand and round them stare
Breathing blasts of Irish air:
Our eagles know their own!

II.

Thou rising sun, fair fall
 Thy greeting on Armagh's time-honour'd wall,
 And on the willows hoar
 That fringe thy silver waters, Avonmore !
 See ! on that hill of drifted sand
 The far-famed Marshal holds command,
 Bagnal, their bravest :—to the right,
 That recreant neither chief nor knight
 “ The Queen's O'Reilly,” he that sold
 His country, clan, and church for gold !
 “ Saint George for England ! ”—Recreant crew !
 What are the Saints ye spurn to you ?
 They charge ; they pass yon grassy swell ;
 They reach our pitfalls hidden well :
 On, warriors native to the sod,
 Be on them in the power of God !

II.

Twin stars ! Twin regents of our righteous war !
 This day remember whose, and who ye are—
 Thou that o'er green Tir-owen's tribes hast sway !
 Thou whom Tir-connell's vales obey !
 The line of Nial, the line of Conn
 So oft at strife, to-day are one !
 To Erin both are dear ; to me
 Dearest he is, and needs must be

My Prince, my Chief, my child, on whom
So early fell the dungeon's doom.*

O'Donnell! hear this day thy Bard!

By those young feet so maim'd and scarr'd,
Bit by the winter's fangs when lost

Thou wandered'st on through snows and frost,
Remember thou those years in chains thou worest,

Snatch'd in false peace from unsuspecting halls,
And that one thought, of all thy pangs the sorest,

Thy subjects groan'd the upstart alien's thralls!

That thought on waft thee through the fight:

On, on, for Erin's right!

* Red Hugh O'Donnell, when but a boy of fifteen, was already celebrated for his beauty, his courage, and his skill in warlike accomplishments. To prevent him from assuming the headship of Tirconnell the following device was resorted to by Sir John Perrot, Lord President of Munster. During the summer of 1587 Red Hugh with Mac Swyne of the *Battle-axes*, O'Gallagher of Ballyshannon, and some other Irish chiefs, had gone to a monastery of Carmelites situated on the western shore of Lough Swilly and facing the mountains of Inishowen, the church of which had long been a famous place of pilgrimage. One day a ship, in appearance a merchant vessel, sailed up the bay, cast anchor opposite Rathmullan, and offered for sale her cargo of Spanish wine. Red Hugh was among those who went on board during the night. The next morning he and his companions found themselves secured under hatches. He was thrown into prison in

IV.

Seest thou yon stream whose tawny waters glide
Through weeds and yellow marsh lingeringly and
slowly ?

Blest is that spot and holy !

There, ages past, Saint Bercan stood and cried,
“ This spot shall quell one day the Invaders' pride ! ”

He saw in mystic trance

The blood-stain flush yon rill :

On, hosts of God, advance ;

Your country's fates fulfil !

Dublin, where he languished for three years and three months. At the end of that time he made his escape, and flying to the south took refuge with Felim O'Toole, who betrayed him. “ He remained again in irons,” says the Chronicle, “ until the Feast of Christmas, 1592, when it seemed to the Son of the Virgin time for him to escape.” Once more he fled, accompanied by two sons of Shane O'Neill, to the mountains of Wicklow, then covered with snow. After wandering about for three days and nights O'Donnell and one of his companions (the other had perished) were found by some of O'Byrne's clansmen beneath the shelter of a cliff, benumbed and almost dead from hunger ; for during those three days their food had consisted of grass and forest leaves. On the restoration of his strength O'Donnell succeeded, with the assistance of O'Neill, in making his way to his native mountains. From that moment the rival Princes of Tircconnell and Tirone were united.

Be Truth this day your might !
Truth lords it in the fight !

v.

O'Neill ! That day be with thee now
When, throned on Ulster's regal seat of stone,
Thou satt'st and thou alone ;
While flocked from far the Tribes, and to thy hand
Was given the snow-white wand,
Erin's authentic sceptre of command !
Kingless a People stood around thee ! Thou
Didst dash the British bauble from thy brow,
And for a coronet laid down
That People's love became once more thy
crown !

True King alone is he
In whom summ'd up his People share the throne :
Fair from the soil he rises like a tree :
Rock-like the stranger presses on it, prone !
Strike for that People's cause !
For Tanistry ; for Brehon laws :
The sage traditions of civility ;
Pure hearths, and faith set free !

vi.

Hark ! the thunder of their meeting !
Hand meets hand, and rough the greeting !

Hark ! the crash of shield and brand ;
 They mix, they mingle, band with band,
 Like two horn-commingling stags
 Wrestling on the mountain crags,
 Intertwisted, intertangled,
 Mangled forehead meeting mangled !
 Lo ! the wavering darkness through
 I see the banner of Red Hugh ;
 Close beside is thine, O'Neill !
 Now they stoop and now they reel,
 Rise once more and onward sail,
 Like two falcons on one gale !
 O ye clansmen past me rushing,
 Like mountain torrents seaward gushing,
 Tell the Chiefs that from this height
 Their Chief of Bards beholds the fight ;
 That on theirs he pours his spirit ;
 Marks their deeds and chaunts their merit ;
 While the Priesthood evermore,
 Like him that ruled God's host of yore,
 With arms outstretch'd that God implore !

VII.

Mightiest of the line of Conn,*
 On to victory ! On, on, on !

* Conn "of the Hundred Fights," King of Ireland,
 A.D. 123.

It is Erin that in thee
Lives and works right wondrously !
Eva from the heavenly bourne
Upon thee her eyes doth turn,
She whose marriage couch was spread*
'Twixt the dying and the dead !
Parcell'd kingdoms one by one
For a prey to traitors thrown ;
Pledges forfeit, broken vows,
Roofless fane, and blazing house ;
All the dreadful deeds of old
Rise resurgent from the mould
For their judgment peal is toll'd !
All our Future takes her stand
Hawk-like on thy lifted hand.
States that live not, vigil keeping
In the limbo of long weeping ;
Palace-courts and minster-towers
That shall make this isle of ours

* The celebrated picture of an Irish artist, Mr. Macclise, has rendered well known this incident. After the capture of Waterford the King of Leinster led forth his daughter and married her to the Norman Strongbow. " The marriage ceremony was hastily performed, and the " wedding cortège passed through streets reeking with the " still warm blood of the brave and unhappy citizens."—*Haverly's Hist.* p. 190.

Fairer than the star of morn,
 Wait thy mandate to be born !
 Chief elect 'mid desolation
 Wield thou well the inspiration
 Thou drawest from a new-born nation !

VIII.

Sleep no longer Bards that hold
 Ranged beneath me harps of gold !
 Smite them with a heavier hand
 Than vengeance lays on axe or brand !
 Pour upon the blast a song
 Linking litanies of wrong,
 'Till, like poison-dews, the strain
 Eat into the Invader's brain.
 On the retributive harp
 Catch that death-shriek shrill and sharp
 Which she utter'd, she whose lord
 Perish'd, Essex, at thy board !
 Peerless chieftain ! peerless wife !
 From his throat, and hers, the knife
 Drain'd the mingled tide of life !
 Sing the base assassin's steel
 By Sussex hired to slay O'Neill ! *

* The intended victim was Shane O'Neill, Prince of Tirone, against whom Elizabeth supported the pretensions of his illegitimate brother Matthew, Baron of Dun-

Sing, fierce Bards the plains sword-wasted,
Sing the cornfields burnt and blasted
That when raged the war no longer
Kernes dog-chased might pine with hunger !
Pour around their ears the groans
Of half-human skeletons
From wet cave or forest-cover
Foodless deserts peering over,
Or upon the roadside lying
Infant dead and mother dying,
On their mouth the grassy stain
Of the wild weed gnaw'd in vain ;—
Look upon them hoary Head
Of the last of Desmonds dead ;
His that drew—too late—his sword
Religion and his right to guard ;
Head that evermore dost frown
From the tower of London down !

gannon, and of his sons. The letter of Sussex, A.D. 1561, which is preserved in the State-paper Office, thus concludes :—" In fine I brake with him to kill Shane, and " bound myself by my oath to see him have a hundred " marks of land. He seemed desirous to serve your " Highness and to have the land ; but fearful to do it, " doubting his escape after. I told[†] him the ways he " might do it, and how to escape after with safety, which " he offered and promised to do."

She that slew him from her barge
 Makes that head this hour the targe
 Of her insults cold and keen,
 England's caliph, not her queen!
 —Portent terrible and dire
 Whom thy country and thy sire
 Branded with a bastard's name,
 Thy birth was but thy lightest shame!
 To honour recreant and thine oath;
 Trampling that faith whose borrow'd garb
 First gave thee sceptre crown and orb,
 Thy flatterers scorn, thy lovers loathe
 That idol with the blood-stained feet
 Ill-throned on murder'd Mary's seat!

IX.

Glory be to God on high!
 That shout rang up into the sky!
 The plain lies bare; the smoke drifts by;
 Again that cry: they fly! they fly!
 O'er them standards thirty-four
 Waved at morn; they wave no more.

Glory be to Him alone who holds the nations in
 His hand,
 And to them the heavenly guardians of our church
 and native land!

Sing, ye priests, your deep Te Deums; bards,
make answer loud and long,
In your rapture flinging heavenward censers of
triumphant song.
Isle for centuries blind in bondage lift once more
thine ancient boast,
From the cliffs of Inishowen southward on to
Carbery's coast!
We have seen the right made perfect, seen the
Hand that rules the spheres
Glance like lightning through the clouds, and
backward roll the wrongful years.
Glory fadeth, but this triumph is no barren mun-
dane glory;
Rays of healing it shall scatter on the eyes that
read our story:
Upon nations bound and torpid as they waken it
shall shine
As on Peter in his chains the angel shone with
light divine.
From the unheeding, from the unholy it may hide,
like Truth, its ray;
But when Truth and Justice conquer on their
crowns its beam shall play:
O'er the ken of troubled tyrants it shall trail a
meteor's glare;
For the blameless it shall glitter as the star of
morning fair:

Whensoever Erin triumphs then its dawn it shall
renew ;
Then O'Neill shall be remember'd and Tirconnell's
chief, Red Hugh !

WAR-SONG OF LEIX.

I.

IS their isle so narrow that here they must come
In search of the milk and grain ?
Would they teach us the lesson they learn'd at home
From Roman and Saxon and Dane ?
Where'er they have march'd, on the barren track
Lies a plume from the raven's wing ;
Where'er they have camp'd, the land is black
Whilst all around is Spring !

II.

Small love they have given, small love they have
got
Since first they darken'd our door ;
The back of the hand and the sole of the foot
From us they have had ; no more !
They shall learn to-day 'twas an easier sport
To catch the maid by the hair,

Or their captives to drown at the Golden Fort
 * Than to beard O'More in his lair !

THE SUGANE EARL. †

A.D. 1601.

I.

I WAS the White Knight that sold him—his
 flesh and his blood !

A Fitz-Gerald betray'd the Fitz-Gerald :
 Death-pale the false friend in the 'mid forest stood ;
 Close by stood the conqueror's herald !
 At the cave-mouth he lean'd on his sword pale and
 dumb,
 But the eye that was on him o'erbore him :

* The celebrated Owny O'More. Under this chief the people of Leix recovered almost all their possessions. Having incautiously exposed himself, he was killed by a musket ball, on the 17th of August, 1600.

† Overcome by the threats of Sir George Carew, President of Munster, the White Knight betrayed his kinsman, the "Sugane" Earl of Desmond, with whom he had previously been on bad terms. The Earl lay hid in a cave among the woods on the White Knight's lands. The White Knight led to it a mixed body of Irish mercenaries and English troops.

“Come forth,” cried the White Knight ;—one
answer’d, “I come !”
And the Chief of his house stood before him !

II.

“Cut him down,” said the captive with cold smile
and stern,
“’Twas a bold stake ; but Satan hath won it !”
In the days of thy father, Earl Desmond, no kerne
Had heard that command, and not done it !
The name of the White Knight shall cease, and his
race !
His castle down fall, roof and rafter !
This day is a day of rebuke ; but the base
Shall meet what he merits hereafter !

LAMENT OF ORMOND ON THE DEATH
OF THE GREAT EARL OF DESMOND,
HIS FOE.

I.

There clung a mist about mine eye,
Or else round him a mist there clung :
From war to war the years went by,
And still that cloud between us hung :

For what he was I saw him not,
Old friend, old comrade, fellow-man :
I saw but that which chance had wrought ;
A rival house, a hostile clan.

II.

In vain a common Faith was ours :
A common Land, a common Foe :
Vainly we chased through Lorha's bowers,
In boyhood paired, the flying roe :
Sea-caves of Irr ! in vain by you
Our horses stemmed the heaving floods,
While freshening gales of morning blew
The sunrise o'er the mountain woods !

III.

Ah spells of Fate ! Ah Wrath, and Wrong !
Ah Friend that once my dearest wert !
Where lay thine image hid so long
But in the centre of my heart ?
Thou fell'st ! a flash from out the past
One moment shewed thee as of yore :
Then followed death, a midnight blast
That swept thee hence for evermore.

IV.

Ah, great right hand, so brave yet kind !
Ah, sovereign eyes ! ah, lordly mirth !

Thy realm to-day—like me—sits blind :
 And endless winter chills thy hearth.
 This day I see thee in thy spring,
 Though seventy winters make me grey :
 This night my bards thy praise shall sing :
 This night for thee my priests shall pray.*

* “ Now, good reader, let there be a truce to words,
 “ and listen to the whistling of the lash.—* * * ‘ There
 “ was then in Ireland Thomas Butler, Earl of Ormond,
 “ who changed his religion in the court of Elizabeth.
 “ Brooding over the scandal he had given by his apostacy,
 “ he resolved to be reconciled to the Church in his last
 “ days. He therefore made his peace with God—edified
 “ all by his piety—and soon after, losing the ineffable
 “ blessing of sight, was gathered to his fathers. Now, ere
 “ he died, he was heard to lament two actions of his life—
 “ first, that he had ever renounced that holy religion in
 “ his youth which in his old age he was not able to suc-
 “ cour ; and, secondly, that he had taken up arms against
 “ the Geraldines of Desmond who were ever the strenuous
 “ champions of the Faith, and the bulwarks of their
 “ country’s liberty. Oh, good God ! why did Ormond
 “ conspire to ruin them ? ”

The Rise, Increase, and Exit of the family of the Geraldines, Earls of Desmond, and Palatines of Kerry—written in Latin by Brother Dominicus de Rosario O’Daly, in the 17th century, and translated by the Rev. C. P. Meahan.)

THE PHANTOM FUNERAL.

A.D. 1601.

James Fitz-Garret, son of the great Earl of Desmond, had been sent to England when a child as a hostage, and was for seventeen years kept a prisoner in the tower, and educated in the Queen's Religion. James Fitz-Thomas, the "Sugane Earl," having meantime assumed the title and prerogatives of Earl of Desmond, the Queen sent her captive to Ireland attended by persons devoted to her, and provided with a *conditional* patent for his restoration. Arriving at Kilmallock, on his way to Kerry, wheat and salt were showered on him by the people, in testimony of loyalty. The next day was Sunday. As the young earl walked to church, it was with difficulty that a guard of English soldiers could keep a path open for him. From street and window and housetop every voice urged him to fidelity to his ancestral faith. The youth, who did not even understand the language in which he was adjured, went on to the Queen's church, as it was called; and with loud cries his clan rushed away, and abandoned his standard for ever. Shortly afterwards he returned to England, where he fell sick; and in a few months the news of his death reached his ancient palatinate of Kerry.—See LELAND'S *History of Ireland*, BOOK IV. Cap. 5, and the *Pacata Hibernia*.

STREW the bed and strew the bier,
(Who rests upon it was never man)
With all that a little child holds dear,
With violets blue and violets wan.

Strew the bed and strew the bier
With the berries that redden thy shores, Corann;
His lip was the berry, his skin was clear
As the waxen blossom. He ne'er was man!

Far off he sleeps; yet we mourn him here;
Their tale is falsehood! he ne'er was man!
'Tis a phantom funeral! Strew the bier
With white lilies brushed by the floating swan.

They lie who say that the false queen caught him
A child asleep on the mountains wide;
A captive reared him; a strange faith taught him;—
'Twas for no strange faith that his father died!

They lie who say that the child return'd
A man unmanned to his towers of pride;
That his people with curses the false Earl spurn'd:
Woe, woe, Kilmallock! they lie, and lied!

The clan was wroth at an ill report,
But now the thunder-cloud melts in tears:

The child that was motherless play'd. 'Twas sport !
A child must sport in his childish years !

Ululah ! Ululah ! Low, sing low !

The women of Desmond loved well that child !
Our lamb was lost in the winter snow :

Long years we sought him in wood and wild.

How many a babe of Fitz-Gerald's blood

In hut was foster'd though born in hall !

The old stock burgeon'd the fair new bud,

The old land welcomed them, each and all !

Glynn weeps to-day by the Shannon's tide,

And Shanid and she that frowns o'er Deal ;

There is woe by the Laune and the Carra's side,

And where the Knight dwells by the woody
Feale.

In Dingle and Beara they chaunt his dirge ;

Far off he faded—our child—sing low !

We have made him a bed by the ocean's surge ;

We have made him a bier on the mountain's
brow.

The clan was bereft ! the old walls they left ;

With cries they rushed to the mountains drear !

But now great sorrow their heart has cleft ;

See ! one by one they are drawing near !

Ululah ! Ululah ! Low, sing low !

The flakes fall fast on the little bier :

The yew-branch and eagle-plume over them
throw !

The last of the Desmond Chiefs lies here.

THE MARCH TO KINSALE.

DECEMBER, A.D. 1601.

I.

O'ER many a river bridged with ice,
Through many a vale with snow-drifts
dumb,

Past quaking fen and precipice

The Princes of the North are come !

Lo, these are they that year by year

Roll'd back the tide of England's war ;—

Rejoice, Kinsale ! thy help is near !

That wondrous winter march is o'er.

And thus they sang, “ To-morrow morn

“ Our eyes shall rest upon the foe :

“ Roll on, swift night in silence borne,

“ And blow, thou breeze of sunrise, blow !”

II.

Blithe as a boy on march'd the host
 With droning pipe and clear-voiced harp ;
At last above that southern coast
 Rang out their war-steed's whinny sharp :
And up the sea-salt slopes they wound,
 And airs once more of ocean quaff'd ;
Those frosty woods the rocks that crown'd
 As though May touch'd them waved and
 laugh'd.
And thus they sang, " To-morrow morn
 " Our eyes shall rest upon our foe :
" Roll on, swift night, in silence borne,
 " And blow, thou breeze of sunrise, blow !"

III.

Beside their watch fires couch'd all night
 Some slept, some laugh'd, at cards some play'd,
While, chaunting on a central height
 Of moonlit crag, the priesthood pray'd :
And some to sweetheart, some to wife
 Sent message kind ; while others told
Triumphant tales of recent fight,
 Or legends of their sires of old.
And thus they sang, " To-morrow morn
 " Our eyes at last shall see the foe ;
" Roll on, swift night, in silence borne,
 " And blow, thou breeze of sunrise, blow !"

KINSALE.

A.D. 1602.

WHAT man can stand amid a place of tombs,
Nor yearn to that poor vanquished dust
beneath?

Above a nation's grave no violet blooms ;
A vanquish'd nation lies in endless death.

'Tis past : the dark is dense with ghost and vision !
All lost : the air is throng'd with moan and
wail :

But one day more and hope had been fruition :
Oh, Athunree, thy fate o'erhung Kinsale !*

* The inexplicable disaster at Kinsale, when, after their marvellous winter march, the two great northern chiefs of Tirconnell and Tirone had succeeded in relieving their Spanish allies there, was one of those events upon which the history of a nation turns. O'Donnell took shipping for Spain, where he died before the promised aid was furnished, in the 29th year of his age, September 10th, 1602. King Philip caused him to be buried in the Cathedral of Valladolid, and raised there a monument in his honour. O'Neill fought his way back to Ulster. Lord Mountjoy had repeatedly wasted the country, so that a terrible famine reigned. Every day O'Neill was

What name is that which lays on every head

A hand like fire, striking the strong locks grey ?

What name is named not save with shame and
dread ?

Once let us name it,—then no more for aye !

Kinsale ! accursed be he the first who bragg'd

“ A city stands where roam'd but late the
flock ;”

Accursed the day, when, from the mountain
dragg'd,

Thy corner-stone forsook the mother-rock !

DIRGE.

I.

I AM black but fair, and the robe I wear
Is dark as death ;

My cheek is pale and I bind my veil
With a cypress wreath.

more strictly hemmed in ; while his allies deserted him, and his retainers perished. When the news arrived of the death of Red Hugh O'Donnell, all hope was over. He agreed to the terms proposed to him by Mountjoy, surrendering his claims as a native Prince, and engaged to resume his title of Earl of Tyrone. Several days previously the Queen had died ; but Mountjoy had concealed this event. A few days later the ships of O'Neill's Spanish allies arrived. He sent them back.

Where the night-shades flower I build the bower
Of my secret rest :
O kind is sleep to the eyes that weep
And the bleeding breast.

II.

My palace floor I tread no more ;
No throne is mine ;
No sceptre I hold, nor drink from gold
Spain's purple wine :
Yet I rule a queen in the worlds unseen
By Saxon eye ;
A realm I have in the hearts of the brave
And an empery.

III.

In crypt, not aisle, of the ruin'd pile
All day I lurk,
And in western caves when the ocean raves,
Through the midnight murk.
But far o'er the sea there is one loves me
'Neath the southern star :
The Fisherman's ring my help shall bring,
And heal my scar.

SONG.

I.

HIS war-horse beats a distant bourne
Till comes the glad new year ;
Therefore thy wheel in silence turn,
And only dream him near.
He fights where native monarchs be,
Where Moors no longer reign :
He strikes and cries, " My land, for thee !"
Amid delivered Spain.

II.

O maiden of the moon-pale face
And darkly lucid eye !
For knights wave-wash'd round Smerwick's
base *
Fair Spanish maidens sigh !
The moss, till comes the glad new year,
Alone may clothe the bough ;
Alone the raindrop deck the breer—
It weeps, and so must thou !

* About 500 of the garrison were flung into the sea,
after the surrender of the Spaniards at Smerwick.

THE SEA-WATCHER.

I.

THE crags lay dark in strange eclipse :
From waves late flushed the glow was gone :
The topsails of the far-off ships
Alone in lessening radiance shone :
Against a stranded boat a maid
Stood leaning, gunnel to her breast,
As though some pain that pressure stayed :
Her large eyes rested on the west.

II.

“Beyond the sea ! beyond the sea !
The weeks, the months, the years go by !
Ah ! when will some one say of me
‘ Beyond the sky ! beyond the sky !’
And yet I would not have thee here
To look upon thy country’s shame :
For me the tear : for me the bier :
Free hearth for thee, and honest fame.”

TO NUALA IN ROME.

Nuala was the sister of Red Hugh, and of Roderick O'Donnell. The latter died an exile in Rome, A.D. 1608. Nuala left her husband, on his proving a traitor to his country, and clave to her brother. It was on finding her weeping at that brother's grave in St. Pietro Montorio, that O'Donnell's Bard addressed to her the noble ode well-known through Clarence Mangan's translation. "O woman of the piercing wail."

THY shining eyes are vague with tears,
Though seldom and unseen they flow ;
The playmate of thy childish years—
My friend—at last lies low.

If I thus late thy love might win,
Withheld for his sake, brief the gain ;
I live in battle's ceaseless din :
Thou liv'st in silent pain.

Nuala ! exile, and the bread
By strangers doled thy cheek make pale ;
On blue Lough Eirne that cheek was red,
In western Ruaidh's gale !

The branching stag looks down no more
From sunset cliffs upon thy path
In Doire. Thou thread'st not now the shore
By Aileach's royal Rath.

No more thou hear'st the sea-wind sing
O'er cairns where Ulster monarchs sleep;
The linnets of the Latian spring
They only make thee weep.

To thee no joy from domes enskied,
Or ruins of Imperial Rome;
Thou look'st beyond them, hungry-eyed,
T'ward thy far Irish home.

On green Tirconnell, now a waste,
The sighs of myriads feed thine own;
Nuala! soon my clarion's blast
Those sighs and thine shall drown!

In Spain they call us king and prince,
And plight alliance, and betray;
In Rome through clouds of frankincense
Slow dawns our better day.

To king or kaiser, prince or pope,
I sue not, nor to magic spell;—
Nuala! on this sword my Hope
Stands like a God. Farewell!

WINTER SONG.

THE high-piled cloud drifts on as in scorn,
Like a ghost, half pining, half stately,
Or a white ice-island in silence borne
O'er seas congeal'd but lately.

With nose to the ground, like a wilder'd hound,
O'er wood-leaves yellow and sodden
On races the wind but cannot find
One sweet track where Spring hath trodden.

The moor is black ; with frosty rime
The wither'd brier is beaded ;
The sluggard Spring hath o'erslept her time,
The Spring that was never more needed.

What says the oak-leaf in the night-cold noon,
And the beech-stock scoffing and surly ?
" Who comes too soon is a witless loon
" Like the clown that is up too early."

But the moss grows fair when the trees are bare,
Long torpid Spring finds a pillow there ;
And beside it the fern with its green crown saith
" Best bloometh the Hope that is rooted in death."

THE ARRAIGNMENT;

OR, FIRST AND LAST.

Thus sang thy missioned Bard, O'Neill,
At England's Court a threatening guest,
When Ulster fell. Round ranks of steel
Ran the sharp whisper ill suppressed.

Ho! space for judgment! squire and groom!
Ho! place for judgment—and a bier!
We bear a dead man to his tomb:
We ask for judgment, not a tear.

Back, beaming eyes, and cloth of gold,
Back, plumes, and stars, and herald's gear,
Injustice crowned, and falsehood stoled!
There stands a lordlier pageant here!

Draw near, Sir King, and lay thy hand
Upon this dead man's breast. Draw near!
The accusing blood, at God's command,
Wells forth! The count is scored. Give ear!

Who, partner with a knave abhorred,*
Farmed as his own that Traitor's feud?
Vicarious fought? By others' sword
Mangled a kingdom unsubdued?

Who reigned in great Religion's name,
Liegeman and Creedsman of the Pope?
Who vindicates this hour his claim
By schism, and rapine, axe and rope?

Who reads by light of blazing roofs
His gospel new to Prince and Kerne?
Who tramples under horses' hoofs
A Race expatriate, slow to learn?

From holy Ulster, last dis-crowned—
'Twas falsehood did the work, not war—
Who drives her sons by scourge and hound
To famished Connacht's utmost shore?

Beware false splendours brave to-day!
Unkingly King, and recreant peers!
Ye hold your prey; but not for aye:
The hour is yours: with us the years!

* Dermot, King of Leinster.

THE SUPPRESSION OF THE FAITH IN ULSTER.

BARDIC ODE, A.D. 1623.

Throughout Ulster, and indeed in most parts of Ireland, it had been found impossible to carry the penal laws against the Roman Catholic Faith fully into effect until the reign of James I. The accession of that prince was hailed as the beginning of an era of liberty and peace. James had ever boasted himself a descendant of the ancient Milesian princes, had had frequent dealings with the Irish Chiefs in their wars against Elizabeth, and was believed by them to be, at least in heart, devoted to the religion of his mother. In the earlier part of his reign, though he refused to grant a legal toleration, he engaged that the "penal laws should not be executed." In the year 1605 a proclamation was issued commanding all Catholic priests to quit Ireland under the penalty of death. Next came the compulsory flight of Tirconnell and Tyrone, The Plantation of Ulster, and the swamping of the Irish Parliament by the creation of fictitious boroughs. In 1622 Archbishop Ussher preached before the new Lord Deputy, Lord Faulkland, his celebrated sermon with the text, "He beareth not the sword in vain." The next year a new proclamation was published commanding the departure of all the Catholic clergy, regular and secular, within forty days.

I.

* **N**OW we know that they are dead!
 They, the Chiefs that kept from scaith
 The northern land,—the sentenced Faith,—
 Now we know that they are dead!

II.

Wrong, with rapine in her leash,
 Walk'd her ancient rounds afresh!
 Law—late come—with leaden mace
 Smites Religion in the face;—
 But the spoiler first had place!

III.

Axes and hammers hot work and hard!
 From niche and from turret the saints they cast;
 The church stands naked as the church-yard;
 The craftsman-army toils fiercely and fast:
 They pluck from the altars the precious stones,
 As vultures pluck at a dead-man's eyes;
 Like wolves down-dragging the flesh from the
 bones
 They strip the gold from the canopies.
 The tombs they rifle; they melt the bells:
 The foundry furnace bubbles and swells!—
 Spoiler for once thou hast err'd; what ho!
 This shaft thou hast loosed from an ill-strung bow!

* See Note in page 149.

In the Faith thou wouldst strangle thy mother died !
 Who slew her? The false queen our chiefs defied !
 Thy heart was with Rome in the days of old ;
 Thy council was ours ; thy council and gold !

IV.

A ban went forth from the regal chambers,
 From the prince that courted us once with lies,
 From the secular synods where he who clambers,
 Not he that walks upright, receives the prize :
 " Go back to thy Judah, sad Prophet, go ;
 " There break thy bread and denounce thy woe ;
 " But no longer in Bethel thy prophecy sing,
 " 'Tis the chapel and court of Samaria's king."
 —Let England renounce her church at will,
 The children of Erin are faithful still.
 For a thousand years has that church been theirs :—
 They are God's, not Cæsar's, the creeds and prayers !

V.

Thou that art haughty and full of bread,
 The crown falls soon from the unwise head !
 Who rear strange altars shall find anon
 The lion thereby and sea-sand thereon !
 In the deserts of penance they peak and pine
 'Till fulfilled are the days of the wrath divine.
 Thy covenant make with the cave and brier
 For shelter by day and by night for fire ;

When the bolt is launch'd at the craggy crest,
And the cedars flame round the eagle's nest !

VI.

A voice from the ocean waves,
And a voice from the forest glooms,
And a voice from old temples and kingly graves,
And a voice from the catacombs !
It cries the king that warreth
On religion and freedom entwined in one
Down drags in his blindness the fane, nor spareth
The noble's hall, nor the throne !
I saw in my visions the walls give way
Of the mystic Babylon ;
I saw the gold Idol whose feet are clay
On his forehead lying prone ;
I saw a sea-eagle defaced with gore
Flag wearily over the main ;
But her nest on the cliff she reach'd no more,
For the shaft was in her brain.
As when some strong man a stone uplifteth
And flingeth into floods far down,
So God, when the balance of Justice shifteth,
Down dasheth the despot's crown,
Down dasheth the realm that abused its trust,
And the nation that knew not pity,
And maketh the image of power unjust
To vanish from out the city !

VII.

Wait my country and be wise ;—
Thou art gall'd in head and breast,
Rest thou need'st, sleep and rest ;
Rest and sleep, and thou shalt rise
And tread down thine enemies.
That which God ordains is best ;
That which God permits is good,
Though by man least understood.
Now His sword He gives to those
Who have wisdom won from woes ;
In them fighting ends the strife :
At other times the impious priest
Slipping on his victim's blood
Falls in death on his own knife !
God is hard to 'scape ! His ire
* Strikes the son if not the sire !
In a time, to God not long,
Thou shalt reckon with this wrong !

* The " Plantation of Ulster " was the loss of Ireland to the son, and to the grandson of James.

THE FRIENDLY BLIGHT.

I.

A MARCH-WIND sang in a frosty wood,
'Twas in Oriel's land on a mountain brown,
While the woodsman stared at the hard black bud,
And the sun through mist went down :
" Not always, it sang, " shall triumph the wrong,
" For God is stronger than man, they say :"
(Let no man tell of the March-wind's song
Till comes the appointed day.)

II.

" Sheaf after sheaf upon Moira's plain,
" And snow upon snow on the hills of Mourne !
" Full many a harvest-moon must wane,
" Full many a Spring return !
" The right shall triumph at last o'er wrong :
Yet none knows how, and none the day :"—
The March-wind sang ; and bit 'mid the song
The little black bud away.

III.

" Blow south-wind on through my vineyard blow !"
So pray'd that land of the palm and vine ;

O Eire, 'tis the north-wind and wintry snow
That strengthen thine oak and pine !
The storm breaks oft upon Uladh's hills ;
Oft falls the wave on the stones by Saul ;
In God's time cometh the thing God wills,
For God is the Lord of all !

EVA.

BY the light in thy sweet face that tells us ever
Of a music as dulcet whose fount is thy
heart ;

By that pure life benign as a crystalline river,
May the good saints protect thee wherever
thou art !

When thy beauty draws near the old heart
brightens ;

The cottager gladdens, thy foot on her floor ;
The blind face clears like a sea that lightens :—
O girl ! thou too art a voice of war !

I fight for Erin ; thine eyes flash o'er her !

The land thou tread'st should be glad and free !
Who hates not the tyrants that spurn and gore her,
Who loves not his country, he ill loves thee !

KING CHARLES'S "GRACES."*

A. D. 1626.

I.

THUS babble the strong ones, "The chain is
" slacken'd !

" Ye can turn half round on your side to sleep !

" With the thunder-cloud still your isle is blacken'd ;

" But it hurls no bolt upon tower or steep.

" Ye are slaves in name : old laws proscribe you ;

" But the king is kindly, the queen is fair ;

" They are knaves or fools who would goad or

" bribe you

" A legal freedom to claim ! Beware !"

II.

We answer thus : our country's honour

To us is dear as our country's life !

That stigma the foul law casts upon her

Is the brand on the fame of a blameless wife !

* Charles played with the Irish the juggling game of maintaining laws against religion, but promising not to enforce them.

Once more we answer : from honour never
Can safety long time be found apart :
The bondsman that vows not his bond to sever,
Is a slave by right and a slave in heart !

NEMESIS.

I.

I DREAM'D. Great bells around me peal'd ;
The world in that sad chime was drown'd ;
Sharp cries as from a battle-field
Were strangled in the wondrous sound :
Had all the kings of earth lain dead ;
Had nations borne them lapp'd in lead
To torch-lit vaults with plume and pall,
Such bells had served for funeral.

II.

'Twas phantasy's dark work ! I slept
Where black Baltard o'erlooks the deep ;
Plunging all night the billows kept
Their ghostly vigil round my sleep.
But I had fed on tragic lore
That day—your annals, " Masters Four !"
And every moan of wind and sea
Was as a funeral chime to me.

SIBYLLA IERNENSIS.

I.

I WOKE. In vain the skylark sang
Above the breezy cliff; in vain
The golden iris flash'd and swang
In hollows of the sea-pink plain.
As ocean shakes—no longer near—
The listening heart and haunts the ear,
The Sibyl and that volume's spells
Pursued me with those funeral bells!

II.

The Irish Sibyl whispers slow
To one who pass'd her tardy Lent
In purple and fine linen, "Lo!
"Thou would'st amend, but not repent!
"Beware! Long prospers fearless crime;
"Half courses bring the perilous time!
"His way who changes, not his will,
"Is strong no more, but guilty still."

THE INTERCESSION.*

ULSTER, A.D. 1641,

IRIEL, the Priest arose and said ;
“The just cause never shall prosper by
wrong !

“The ill cause battens on blood ill shed ;
“ ’Tis Virtue only makes Justice strong.

“I have hidden the Saxon’s wife and child
“Beneath the altar ; behind the porch ;
“O’er them that believe not these hands have
piled
“The stoles and the vestments of holy Church !

* Dr. Leland and other historians relate that the Catholic clergy frequently interfered for the protection of the victims of that massacre which took place at an early period of the Ulster Rising of 1641. They hid them beneath their altars. From the landing of Owen Roe O’Neill all such crimes ceased. They disgraced a just cause, and, doubtless, drew down a divine punishment. A lamentable list of the massacres committed in the same year, at *the other side*—massacres less generally known—will be found in Dr. MORAN’S “*Persecutions suffered by the Catholics under Cromwell and the Puritans*,” p. 168. It is quoted from a contemporary record.

“ I have hid three men in a hollow oak ;

“ I have hid three maids in an ocean cave :”
As though he were lord of the thunder stroke,
The old Priest lifted his hand—to save.

But the people loved not the words he spake ;

And their face was changed for their heart
was sore :

They answer'd nought ; but their brows grew
black,

And the hoarse halls roar'd like a torrent's
roar.

“ Has the Stranger robb'd you of house and
land ?

“ In battle meet him and smite him down !

“ Has he sharpen'd the dagger ? Lift ye the
brand !

“ Has he trapp'd your princes ? Set free the
“ clown !

“ Has the Stranger his country and knighthood
“ shamed ?

“ Though he 'scape God's vengeance so shall
“ not ye !

“ His own God chastens ! Be never named

“ With the Mullaghmast slaughter ! Be just
“ and free !”

But the people received not the words he spake,
For the wrong on their heart had made it sore ;
And their brows grew black like the stormy rack,
And the hoarse halls roar'd like the wave-
wash'd shore.

Then Iriel the Priest put forth a curse ;
And horror crept o'er them from vein to
vein ;—

A curse upon man and a curse upon horse,
As forth they rode to the battle plain.

And there never came to them luck nor grace,
No saint in the battle-field help'd them more,
Till O'Neill who hated the warfare base
Had landed at Doe on Tirconnell's shore.

True Knight, true Christian, true Prince was he !
He lived for Erin ; for Erin died :
Had Charles proved true and the Faith set free
O'Neill had triumph'd at Charles's side.

DIRGE OF RORY O'MORE.

A.D. 1642.

UP the sea-sadden'd valley at evening's decline
A heifer walks lowing; "the silk of the
" kine;"*

From the deep to the mountain she roams, and
again

From the mountains' green urn to the purple-
rimm'd main.

Whom seek'st thou, sad Mother! Thine own is
not thine!

He dropp'd from the headland; he sank in the
brine!

'Twas a dream! but in dream at thy foot did he
follow

Through the meadow-sweet on by the marish
and mallow!

Was he thine? Have they slain him? Thou
seek'st him, not knowing

Thyself too art theirs, thy sweet breath and sad
lowing!

* One of the mystical names for Ireland used by the
bards.

Thy gold horn is theirs ; thy dark eye, and thy
silk !

And that which torments thee, thy milk, is their
milk !

'Twas no dream, Mother Land ! 'Twas no dream,
Inisfail !

Hope dreams, but grief dreams not—the grief of
the Gael !

From Leix and Ikerren to Donegal's shore
Rolls the dirge of thy last and thy bravest—
O'More !

THE BATTLE OF BENBURB ;

A BARDIC ODE.

This battle was won by Owen Roe O'Neill over the
Parliamentarian forces, A.D. 1646. The Rebels left
3,423 of their dead on the field.

I.

AT even I mused on the wrong of the Gael ;—
A storm-blast went by me with wolf-like
wail,
And the leaves of the forest, plague-spotted and
dead,
Like a multitude broken before it fled ;

'Then I saw in my visions a host back driven
(Ye clansmen be true) by a Chief from heaven !

II.

At midnight I gazed on the moonless skies ;—
There glisten'd, 'mid other star-blazonries,
A Sword all stars ; then heaven, I knew,
Hath holy work for a sword to do :
Be true, ye clansmen of Nial ! Be true !

III.

At morning I look'd as the sun uprose
On the fair hills of Antrim late white with snows ;
Was it morning only that dyed them red ?
Martyr'd hosts, methought, had bled
On their sanguine ridges for years not few !
Ye clansmen of Conn, this day be true !

IV.

There is felt once more on the earth
The step of a kingly man :
Like a dead man hidden he lay from his birth,
Exiled from his country and clan :
This day his standard he flingeth forth ;
He tramples the bond and ban :
Let them look in his face that usurp'd his
hearth ;
Let them vanquish him, they who can !

Owen Roe, our own O'Neill !

He treads once more our land !

The sword in his hand is of Spanish steel,

But the hand is an Irish hand !

v.

* I saw in old time with these eyes that fail

The ship drop down Lough Swilly ;

Lessening 'mid billows the snowy sail

Bent down like a storm-rock'd lily,

* In 1607 a conspiracy, never proved, and probably never undertaken, was suddenly charged against Tirone and Tirconnell. To avoid arrest the two Earls, whose previous submission had rendered them helpless, embarked on board a ship that chanced to have anchored in Lough Swilly. They found refuge in Rome, where their tombs are shewn to the traveller in the church of San Pietro, on the Janiculan Hill.

The Four Masters thus record the tragedy :—" They embarked on the festival of Holy Cross, in autumn. " 'This was a princely company: and it is certain that " the sea has not borne, and the wind has not wasted in " modern times a number of persons in one ship more " eminent, illustrious, or noble in race, heroic deeds, " valour, feats of arms, and brave achievements than " they. Would that God had but permitted them to " remain in their patrimonial inheritance until the children had arrived at the age of manhood. Woe to the " heart that meditated, woe to the council that recommended the project of this expedition "

Far, far it bore them, those Sceptres old
That had ruled o'er Ulster for ages untold,
The sceptre of Nial and the sceptre of Conn,
Thy Princes, Tirconnell and green Tyrone!
No freight like that since the mountain-pine
Left first the hills for the salt sea-brine!
Down sank on the ocean a blood-red sun
As westward they drifted, when hope was none,
With their priests and their children o'er ocean's
foam

And every archive of house and home :
Amid the sea-surges their bards sang dirges :
God rest their bones in their graves at Rome !

Owen Roe, our own O'Neill !

He treads once more our land !

The sword in his hand is of Spanish steel,
But the hand is an Irish hand !

VI.

I saw in old time through the drifts of the snow
* A shepherdless people dash'd to and fro,
With hands toss'd up in the wintry air,
With the laughter of madness or shriek of de-
spair.

Dispersed is the flock when the shepherd lies low :
The sword was of parchment : a lie was the blow :

* The " Plantation of Ulster."

Their crime? That with Christendom still to
the death

They cling to the Church that gave England her
Faith!

What is Time? I can see the rain beat the
white hair,

And the sleet that defaces the face that was fair,
As onward they stagger o'er mountain and moor
From the Ardes and Rathlin to Corrib's bleak
shore:

I can hear the babe weep in the pause of the wind:
"To Connaught!" The bloodhounds are bay-
ing behind!

—Who dwell in their homesteads? That rabble
accurst

Broad-cast by the false king that daintly trod
In the steps of the Tudor tigress whose thirst
Was quench'd in his mother's blood!

He was false to his mother; they lie to his son:
Avengers of honour and Erin, on, on!

Owen Roe, our own O'Neill!

He treads once more our land!

The sword in his hand is of Spanish steel,
But the hand is an Irish hand!

VII.

Visions no more of the dreadful past!

The things that I long'd for are mine at last!

I see them and hold them with heart and eyes ;
On Irish ground, under Irish skies,
An Irish army, clan by clan,
The standard of Ulster on leading the van !
Each prince with his clansmen, tried men like
steel ;
Unvanquish'd Maolmora, Cormac the leal !
And the host that meets them right well I know,
The psalm-singing boors of that Scot, Munro !
—We hated you, Barons of the Pale !
But now half friends are Norman and Gael ;
For both the old foes are of lineage old,
And both the old Faith and old manners hold.
Last came the Saxon ; first the Dane ;—
The latest pirate the worst of the twain !
Rebels against their English king,
O'er us their chains they dare to fling !
Forgers of creeds till now unknown,
To us they scorn to leave our own !
This night they shall sup with “the Queen's
O'Connor,”*
Like him in fate as like in dishonour.

* The treachery by which Sir George Carew, President of Munster, contrived to separate the Earl of Desmond from his allies, Dermond O'Connor and Redmond Burke, is described in the *Pacata Hibernia*, written by his secretary Stafford, p. 65, 91, 97, 193. Dublin, 1810.

Montgomery, Conway ! base-born crew !
This day ye shall learn an old lesson anew !
Thou art red with sunset this hour, Blackwater ;
But twice ere now thou wert red with slaughter !
Another O'Neill by the ford they met ;
And " the bloody loaming " men name it yet !
Owen Roe, our own O'Neill !

He treads once more our land !
The sword in his hand is of Spanish steel,
But the hand is an Irish hand !

VIII.

The storm of the battle rings out ! On ! on !
Shine well in their faces thou setting sun !
The smoke grows crimson : from left to right
Swift flashes the spleenful and racing light !
The horses stretched forward with belly to ground :
On ! on ! like a lake which has burst its bound !
Through the clangour of brands rolls the laughter
of cannon :

Wind-borne it shall reach thine old walls, Dun-
gannon !

Our widow'd Cathedrals an ancient strain
To-morrow triumphant shall chaunt again !
On, on ! This night on thy banks Loch Neagh,
Men born in bondage shall couch them free !
On warriors launch'd by a warrior's hand !
Four years ye were leash'd in a brazen band ;

He counted your bones, and he meted your might,
This hour he dashes you into the fight !
Strong sun of the battle, great chief whose eye
Wherever it gazes makes victory,
This hour thou shalt see them do or die !

Owen Roe, our own O'Neill !

He treads once more our land !

The sword in his hand is of Spanish steel,
But the hand is an Irish hand !

IX.

Through the dust and the mist of the golden West
New hosts draw nigh :—is it friend or foe ?
They come ! They are ours ! Like a cloud their
vanguard hours !

No help from thy brother this day Munro !
They form : there stand they one moment, still !

Now, now, they charge under banner and sign :
They breast unbroken the slope of the hill,

It breaks before them, the Invader's line !

Their horse and their foot are crush'd together
Like harbour-locked ships in the winter weather,
Each dash'd upon each, the churn'd wave strewing
With wreck upon wreck, and ruin on ruin.

The spine of their battle gives way with a yell :
Down drop their standards : that cry was their
knell !

Some on the bank and some in the river
Struggling they lie that shall rally never.
'Twas God fought for us ! with hands of might
From on high He kneaded and shaped the fight !
To Him be the praise ! What He wills must be :
With Him is the future : for blind are we !
Let Ormond at will make terms or refuse them !
Let Charles the Confederates win or loose them ;
Uplift the old Faith and annul the old strife,
Or cheat us, and forfeit his kingdom and life !
Come hereafter what must or may
Ulster thy cause is avenged to-day :
What fraud took from us and force, the sword
That strikes in daylight makes ours, restored !

Owen Roe, our own O'Neill !

He treads once more our land !

The sword in his hand is of Spanish steel,
But the hand is an Irish hand !

THE WAIL OF THOMOND.*

A.D. 1647.

CAN it be? Can it be? Can O'Brien be
traitor?

Can the great House Dalcassian' be faithless to
Eire?

* Mr. O'Donoghue, in his "Historical Memoir of the O'Briens," denies that Lord Inchiquin was present at the slaughter in the Cathedral of Cashel, and affirms that his conduct has been otherwise misrepresented by historians. His character may thus be regarded as one of those respecting which History has not yet pronounced her final verdict. Mr. O'Donoghue states, however, that Inchiquin was familiarly known as "*Murrough an to-thaine*" (of the Burnings), "in consequence of his making as much use of fire as of the sword in his operations among his countrymen." There can consequently be no doubt as to the mode in which his career would have been regarded by a contemporary Bard of Thomond. Lord Inchiquin returned to the cause of Charles a short time after his own fatal military talents had ruined it in southern Ireland. Eventually he returned to the Catholic Church likewise;—for, like Ormond, he had been educated in a religion opposed to that of his father, under Queen Elizabeth's celebrated "Court of Wards."

The sons of the stranger have wrong'd—let them
hate her!

Old Thomond well knows them; they hate
her for hire!

Can our Murrough be leagued with the rebels and
rangers

'Gainst his faith and his country his king and
his race?

Can he bear the low wailings the curses the
banter's?

There's a scourge worse than these—the ap-
plause of the base!

II.

Was the hand that set fire to the churches des-
cended

From the hand of the king that up-rear'd them,
Boroimhe? *

When the blood of the priests and the people ran
blended

Who was it cried “spare them not?” Inchiquin,
who?

Some Fury o'er-ruled thee! some root hadst thou
eaten!

'Twas a Demon that stalked in thy shape!
'Twas not thou!

* Pronounced “Borùe.”

Oh, Murrough ! not tears of the angels can
sweeten
That blood-stain ; that Cain-mark erase from
thy brow !

DIRGE OF OWEN ROE O'NEILL.

A.D. 1619.

So, 'tis over ! Lift the dead !
Bear him to his place of rest,
Broken heart, and blighted head :
Lay the Cross upon his breast.

There be many die too late ;
Here is one that died too soon :*
'Twas not Fortune—it was Fate
After him that cast her shoon.

Toll the church bells slowly : toll !
God this day is wroth with Eire :

* The conquerer of Benburb died, (by poison as was believed at the time), just after he and Ormond had concluded terms for joint action against Cromwell. Had he not been summoned to Kilkenny when on the point of following up the victory of Benburb, the Puritan army must within a few days have been driven out of Ulster.

Seal the book, and fold the scroll ;
Break the harp, and burst the wire.

Lords and priests, ye talked and talked
In Kilkenny's Council Hall ;
But this man whose game ye baulked
Was the true man 'mong you all.

'Twas not in the field he fell !
Sing his requiem, dark-stoled choir !
Let a nation sound his knell :
God this day is wroth with Fire !

THE BISHOP OF ROSS.

A.D. 1630.

THEY led him to the peopled wall :
" Thy sons !" they said, " are those within !
" If at thy word their standards fall
" Thy life and freedom thou shalt win !"

Then spake that warrior Bishop old
" Remove these chains that I may bear
" My crosier staff and stole of gold :
" My judgment then will I declare."

They robed him in his robes of state :

They set the mitre on his head :

On tower and gate was silence great :

The hearts that loved him froze with dread.

He spake : "Right holy is your strife!

"Fight for your country, king,* and faith :

"I taught you to be true in life :

"I teach you to be true in death.

"A priest apart by God is set

"To offer prayer and sacrifice :

"And he is sacrificial yet

"The pontiff for his flock who dies."

Ere yet he fell, his hand on high

He raised, and benediction gave ;

Then sank in death content to die :—

Thy great heart, Erin, was his grave.

* Charles the First.

D I R G E .

A.D. 1652.

I.

WHOSE were they those voices? What foot-
steps came near me?

Can the dead to the living draw nigh and be
heard?

I wept in my sleep; but ere morning to cheer me
Came a breeze from the woodland, a song from
the bird.

O sons of my heart! the long-hair'd the strong-
handed!

Your phantoms rush by me with war-cry and
wail:—

Ye too for your Faith and your Country late
banded,

My sons by adoption, mail'd knights of the
Pale!

II.

Is there sorrow, O ye that pass by, like my sorow?
Of the kings I brought forth there remaineth
not one!

Each day is dishonour'd; disastrous each
morrow :—

In the yew-wood I couch till the day-light is
done.

At midnight I lean from the cliff o'er the waters,
And hear, as the thunder comes up from the
sea,

Your moanings, my sons, and your wailings, my
daughters :*

With the sea-dirge they mix not : they clamour
to me !

THE IRISH SLAVE IN BARBADOES.

BESIDE our shieling spread an oak :
Close by, a beech, its brother :
Between them rose the pale blue smoke
They mingled each with other.

* At the end of the Cromwellian war, the population of Ireland was reduced from more than 1,400,000 to 800,000. A law was passed banishing all Catholics to the west of the Shannon. More than half of the property of the country was confiscated. Sir William Petty ends his statement thus :—" So there were lost 689,000 souls ; for whose blood some one should answer both to God and the King !"

The gold mead stretched before our door
Beyond the church-tower taper :
The river wound into the moor
In distance lost and vapour.

Amid green hazels, cradle-swung,
Our babe, with rapture dancing,
Watched furry shapes the roots among,
With beaded eyes forth glancing !

Ah, years of blessing ! Rich no more,
Yet grateful and contented,
The lands that Strafford from us tore
No longer we lamented.

So fared it till that night of woe
When, from the mountains blaring,
The deep horns called, " the foe, the foe !"
And fires were round us giaring.

He went : next day our hearth was cold
Then came that week of slaughter :—
I woke within the ship's black hold,
And heard the rushing water.

Ah ! those that seemed our life can die,
Yet we live on and wither !
Fling out thy fires thou Indian sky :
Toss all thy torches hither !

Let salt morass and swamps of cane
Send forth their ambushed fever !
Oh death unstrain at last my chain,
And bid me rest forever !*

* “ Sir William Petty, writing in 1672, states that six thousand boys and women were thus sold as slaves to the undertakers of the American Islands. * * * When Secretary Thurloe wrote to the Lord Deputy of Ireland, to inform him that a stock of Irish was required for the peopling of Jamaica, the Lord Deputy replied ;— ‘ Concerning the supply of young men, although we must use ‘ force in taking them up, yet it being so much for their ‘ own good, and likely to be of so great advantage to the ‘ public, it is not the least doubted but that you may ‘ have such a number of them as you may think fit to ‘ make use of on this account.’ * * * When the Rev. John Grace visited those Islands in 1666, he found that there were as yet no fewer than 12,000 Irish scattered amongst them, and that they were treated as slaves. * * * *Historical Sketch of the Persecutions suffered by the Catholics of Ireland, under the rule of Cromwell and the Puritans.* By the Rev. PATRICK FRANCIS MORAN. J. Duffy, Dublin.

IN RUIN RECONCILED.

I HEARD a woman's voice that wailed
Between the sandhills and the sea :
The famished sea-bird past me sailed
Into the dim infinity.

I stood on boundless, rainy moors :
Far off I saw a great Rock loom ;
The grey dawn smote its iron doors ;
And then I knew it was a Tomb.

Two queenly shapes before the grate
Watched, couchant on the barren ground ;
Two regal shades in ruined state,
One Gael, one Norman ; both discrowned.

THE WHEEL OF AFFLICTION.

BRIGHT is the Dream-land of them that
weep ;
Of the outcast head on the mountains bare :
Thy Saints, O Eire, I have seen in sleep ;
Thy Queens on the battle-plain, fierce yet fair.

Three times I dreamed on Tyrawley's shore :
Through ranks of the Vanished I paced a
mile :
On the right stood Kings, and their crowns they
wore :
On the left stood Priests without gold or guile.

But the vision I saw when the deep I crossed,
When I crossed from Iorras to Donegal,
By night, on the Vigil of Pentecost,
Was the saddest vision, yet best of all.

'Twixt the sea and the sky a Wheel rolled
round :
It breathed a blast on the steadfast stars ;
'Twas huge as that circle* with marvels wound—
The marvels that reign o'er the Calendars.

Then an Angel spake—"That Wheel is Earth ;
"And it grinds the wheat of the Bread of
God :"
And the Angel of Eire, with an Angel's mirth,
"The mill-stream from Heaven is the Martyrs'
blood."

* The Zodiack.

Epilogue.

LIKE dew from above it fell—from beyond
the limits of ether ;

From above the courses of stars, and the
chaunt of angelical choirs ;

“ If God afflicts the Land, then God of a surety
“ is with her ;

“ Her heart-drops counts, like beads, and walks
“ with her through the fires.

“ Time, and a Time, and Times ! Earth’s no-
“ blest birth was the latest :

“ That latest birth was Man : his flesh her
“ Redeemer wears :

“ Time, and a Time, and Times ! one day the
“ least shall be greatest :

“ In glory God reaps, but sows below in the
“ valley of tears.”

It was no Seraph's song, nor the spheral chime
of creation,

That Voice! To earth it stooped as a cloud
to the ocean flood:

It had ascended in sighs from the anguished
heart of a nation;

The musical echo came back from the bound-
less bosom of God.

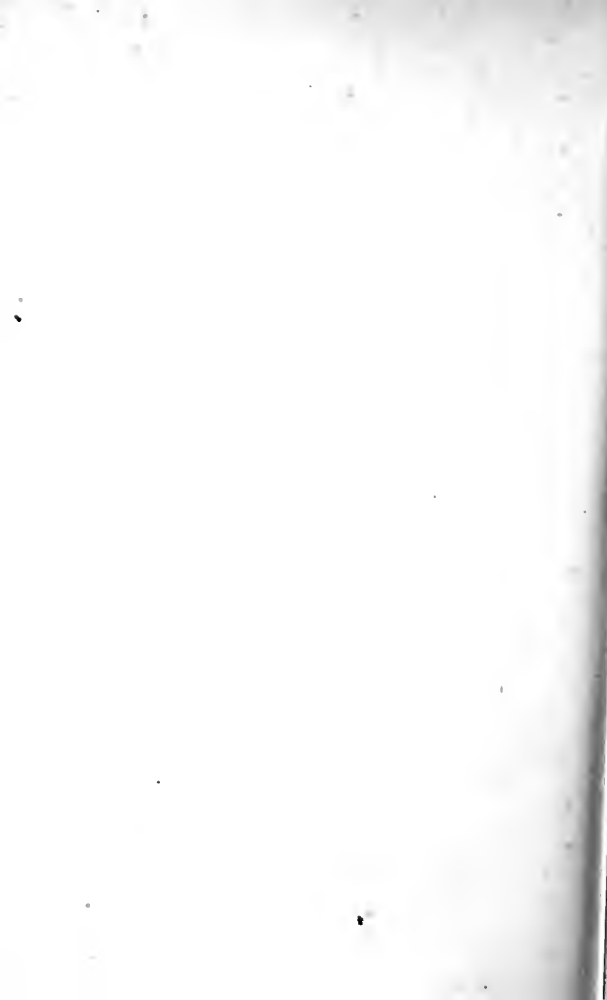
INISFAIL ;

A LYRICAL CHRONICLE OF IRELAND.

PART III.

I. THE PENAL LAWS.

II. THE VICTORY OF ENDURANCE.



PART III.

Prologue.

PARVULI EJUS.

IN the night, in the night, O my Country, the
stream calls out from afar :

So swells thy voice through the ages, sonorous
and vast :

In the night, in the night, O my Country, clear
flashes the star :

So flashes on me thy face through the gloom of
the past.

I sleep not ; I watch : in blows the wind ice-
wing'd, and ice-finger'd :

My forehead it cools and slakes the fire in my
breast ;

Though it sighs o'er the plains where oft thine
exiles look'd back, and long linger'd,

And the graves where thy famish'd lie dumb
and thine outcasts find rest.

For up from those vales wherein thy brave and
thy beautiful moulder,
And on through the homesteads waste and the
temples defiled,
A voice goes forth on that wind, as old as the
Islands and older,
“God reigns: at His feet earth’s Destiny sleeps
“like a child.”

THE LADY TURNED BEGGAR.

The Irish who fought for Charles I., and whose estates were confiscated on that account, looked in vain, with a few exceptions, for their restoration on the accession of Charles II. The widow of one of these royalists, Lord Roche, in her old age used to be seen begging in the streets of Cork.

I.

“**D**ROP an alms on shrunken fingers,” faintly
with a smile she said ;
But the smile was not of pleasure, and unroselike
was the red :
“Fasts wear thin the pride fantastic ;—one I left
“at home lacks bread.”*

II.

Lady! Hard is the beginning—so they say—of
shameless sinning :
Ay but (loss disguised in winning) easier grows it
day by day :
May thy shamefaced, sinless pleading to the un-
hearing or the unheeding
Lacerate less an inly bleeding bosom ere those
locks grow grey ;
Locks whose midnight once was lighted with the
diamond's changeful ray !

III.

Silks worn bare with work's abusing ; cheek made
wan with hailstorm's bruising ;
Eye its splendour slowly losing ; state less stately
in decay ;—
Chaunting ballad or old ditty year by year she
roam'd the city :
Love at first is kin to pity ; pity to contempt, men
say ;
Wonder lessen'd, reverence slacken'd, as the raven
locks grew grey.

IV.

What is that makes sadness sadder ? What is that
makes madness madder ?

Shame, a sharper-venomed adder, gnaws when
looks once kind betray !

“ She is poor : the poor are common ! ’Twas a
“ countess : ’tis a woman :

“ Looks she has at times scarce human ! England !
“ there should be her stay :

“ ’Twas for Charles the old lord battled—Charles
“ and England—so men say.”

v.

Charles ! Whitehall ! the wine, the revel ! No,
she sinks not to *that* level !

Mime or pander ; king or devil ! She will die on
Ireland’s shore !

Ne’er, till Portsmouth’s brazen forehead grows
with virtuous blushes florid,

Will she pass that gate abhorred, climb that stair-
case, tread that floor :

Let *that* forehead wear the diamond which Lord
Roche’s widow wore !

vi.

Critic guest through Ireland wending, careless
praise with cavil blending,

Wonder not, in old man bending or in beggar boys
at play,

Wonder not at aspect regal, princely front or eye
of eagle :

Common these where baying beagle, or the wire-
 hair'd wolf-hound grey
 Chased old nobles once through woodlands which
 the ignoble made their prey.
 That new-boasted art—*subsoiling*—old in Ireland
 is men say :
 Old in Ireland—so men say.

ARCHBISHOP PLUNKET.

A.D. 1681.

(THE LAST VICTIM OF THE "POPISH PLOT.")

"The Earl of Essex went to the King (Charles II.) to apply for a pardon, and told his Majesty 'the witnesses must needs be perjured, as what they swore could not possibly be true;' but his Majesty answered in a passion, 'Why did you not declare this then at the trial? I dare pardon nobody—his blood be upon your head, and not mine!'"—HAVERTY'S *Hist. of Ireland*. See also Dr. MORAN'S admirable *Life of Archbishop Plunket*.

WHY crowd ye windows thus, and doors?
 Why climb ye tower and steeple?
 What lures you forth, O senators?
 What brings you here, O people?

Here there is nothing worth your note—
'Tis but an old man dying :
The noblest stag this season caught,
And in the old nets lying !

Sirs, there are marvels, but not here :
Here's but the thread-bare fable
Whose sense nor sage discerns, nor seer ;
Unwilling is unable !

That prince who lurk'd in bush and brake
While blood-hounds bay'd behind him
Now, to his father's throne brought back,
In pleasure's wreaths doth wind him.

The primate of that race, whose sword
Stream'd last to save that father,
To-day is reaping such reward
As Irish virtues gather.

Back to your councils, courts, and feasts !
'Tis but a new "Intruder"
Conjoin'd with those two hundred priests
That dyed the blocks of Tudor !

A BALLAD OF SARSFIELD;

OR, THE BURSTING OF THE GUNS.

A.D. 1690.

SARSFIELD went out the Dutch to rout,
And to take and break their cannon;
To mass went he at half-past three,
And at four he cross'd the Shannon.

Tirconnel slept. In dream his thoughts
Old fields of victory ran on;
And the chieftains of Thomond in Limerick's
towers
Slept well by the banks of Shannon.

He rode ten miles and he cross'd the ford,
And couch'd in the wood and waited;
Till, left and right, on march'd in sight
That host which the true men hated.

"Charge!" Sarsfield cried; and the green hill-
side
As they charged replied in thunder;
They rode o'er the plain and they rode o'er the
slain,
And the rebel rout lay under!

He burn'd the gear the knaves held dear,—
For his king he fought, not plunder ;
With powder he cramm'd the guns and ramm'd
Their mouths the red soil under.

The spark flash'd out—like a nation's shout
The sound into heaven ascended ;
The hosts of the sky made to earth reply,
And the thunders twain were blended !

Sarsfield went out the Dutch to rout,
And to take and break their cannon ;—
A century after, Sarsfield's laughter
Was echoed from Dungannon.*

* “ They had met at Dungannon, the nobles and the
“ peasants, and a new language sprang suddenly into
“ existence. They called the Catholics ‘ fellow-subjects,’
“ and themselves ‘ Irishmen and Christians.’ It was her
“ hour of trial, and England had not strength for it, be-
“ cause justice was against her, and a great fall had
“ dispelled a long inebriation. The revolution of 1782
“ was a revolution effected by blood ; but that blood
“ had flowed in a remote land. You lost America ; but
“ you retained Ireland.”—*English Misrule and Irish*
Misdeeds, p. 87. MacGlashan and Gill, Dublin.

A BALLAD OF ATHLONE;

OR, HOW THEY BROKE DOWN THE BRIDGE.

DOES any man dream that a Gael can fear,
Of a thousand deeds let him learn but one !
The Shannon swept onward, broad and clear,
Between the Leaguers and worn Athlone.

“ Break down the bridge ! ”—Six warriors rushed
Through the storm of shot and the storm of
shell :

With late, but certain, victory flushed
The grim Dutch gunners eyed them well.

They wrenched at the planks 'mid a hail of fire :
They fell in death, their work half done :
The bridge stood fast ; and nigh and nigher
The foe swarmed darkly, densely on.

“ Oh who for Erin will strike a stroke ?

“ Who hurl yon planks where the waters
roar ? ”

Six warriors forth from their comrades broke.
And flung them upon that bridge once more.

Again at the rocking planks they dashed ;
And four dropped dead ; and two remained :
The huge beams groaned, and the arch down-
crashed ;—
Two stalward swimmers the margin gained.

St. Ruth in his stirrups stood up, and cried,
“ I have seen no deed like that in France !”
With a toss of his head Sarsfield replied,
“ They had luck, the dogs ! ’Twas a merry
chance !”

Oh ! many a year upon Shannon’s side
They sang upon moor and they sang upon
heath
Of the twain that breasted that raging tide,
And the ten that shook bloody hands with
Death !

A SONG OF THE BRIGADE.

The Irish Brigade, consisting originally of soldiers of James II., took service with more than one Continental Sovereign. In many a land it made the name of Ireland famous. The Brigade was recruited from Ireland till the latter part of the 18th century, and it is said that, from first to last, nearly 500,000 men belonged to it.

I SNATCHED a stone from the bloodied brook
And hurled it at my household door !

No farewell of my love I took :

I shall see my friend no more.

I dashed across the church-yard bound :

I knelt not by my parents' graves :

There rang from my heart a clarion's sound

That summoned me o'er the waves.

No land to me can native be

That strangers trample and tyrants stain :

When the valleys I loved are cleansed and free

They are mine, they are mine again !

Till then, in sunshine or sunless weather,

By Seine and Loire, and the broad Garonne,

My war-horse and I roam on together

Wherever God wills. On ! on !

A SONG OF THE BRIGADE.

RIVER that through this purple plain
Toilest (once redder) to the main,
Go, kiss for me the banks of Seine!

Tell him I loved, and love for aye,
That his I am though far away—
More his than on the marriage-day.

Tell him thy flowers for him I twine
When first the slow sad mornings shine
In thy dim glass ; for he is mine.

Tell him when evening's tearful light
Bathes those dark towers on Aughrim's height,
'There where he fought, in heart I fight.

A freeman's banner o'er him waves !
So be it ! I but tend the graves
Where freemen sleep whose sons are slaves.

Tell him I nurse his noble race,
Nor weep save o'er one sleeping face
Wherein those looks of his I trace.

For him my beads I count when falls
 Moonbeam or shower at intervals
 Upon our burn'd and blacken'd walls :

And bless him ! bless the bold Brigade—
 May God go with them, horse and blade,
 For Faith's defence, and Ireland's aid !

SONG.

I.

NOT always the winter ! not always the wail !
 The heart heals perforce where the spirit is
 pure !
 The apple-tree blooms in the glens of Imayle ;
 The blackbird sings loud by the Slane and the
 Suir !
 There are princes no more in Kincora* and Tara,
 But the gold-flower laughs out from the Mague
 at Athdara ;
 And the Spring-tide that wakens the leaf in the
 bud,
 (Sad mother, forgive us) shoots joy through our
 blood !

* Kincora, on Lough Derg, was the palace of Brian the Great.

II.

Not always the winter ! not always the moan

Our fathers they tell us in old time were free :
Free to-day is the stag in the woods of Idrone,
And the eagle that fleets from Loch Lein o'er
the Lee !

The blue-bells rise up where the young May hath
trod ;

The souls of our martyrs are reigning with God !
Sad mother, forgive us ! yon skylark no choice
Permits us. From heaven he is crying, " Re-
joice !

A BRIGADE SONG.

A.D. 1706.

I.

WHAT sound goes up among the Alps !
The shouts of Irish battle !

The echoes reach their snowy scalps :

From cliff to cliff they rattle !

In vain he strove—the Duke—Eugene :—

That flying host to rally :

The squadrons green, they swept it clean

Beyond Marsiglia's valley. *

* The battle of Marsiglia, fought by the French under Catinat against the Duke of Savoy and Prince Eugene,

II.

Who fixed their standards on thy wall
Long-leagured Barcelona ! *
Unfallen, who saw the bravest fall ?
Reply, betrayed Cremona !
Oh graves of Sarsfield and of Clare !
Oh Ramillies and Landen ! †
Their brand we bear : their faith we share
Their cause we'll ne'er abandon !

close to the Waldensian Alps, in the year 1693, was decided, as is stated, by the valour of the 6,000 Irish who fought on the French side.

* The French had lost 10,000 men in vain attempts to take Barcelona: at last the Irish regiments of Dillon dislodged the Spaniards from the neighbouring hills, and the capture of the city followed.

† Lord Clare fell at the battle of Ramillies, A.D. 1706 ; Sarsfield Earl of Lucan, on the field of Landen, A.D. 1693. Catching in his hand the blood that trickled from his wound he exclaimed, " Oh that this had been for Ireland ! "

THE NEW RACE.

I.

O YE who have vanquish'd the land and retain
it,
How little ye know what ye miss of delight !
There are worlds in her heart—could ye seek it or
gain it—
That would clothe a true noble with glory and
might. *

* Among that new race there were however many who remembered that where there is no country, there can be no noble. But for them the Penal code would have been more universally carried into execution. " The executioners were more merciful than the judges ; nor could men be found, though corrupted by the tyranny obtruded upon them, though blinded by an apparent interest, and inflamed by the animosities both of religion and of race, to carry those laws into full effect, and make them bring forth their perfect fruits. The sentenced priest was spared by the despotic neighbour, near whose gate he lurked : the people still knelt around their broken altars ; the children still revered their fathers if not their laws ; society continued to exist ; no rebellion gave a pretext for this oppression ; till, partly from a universal disgust, partly from a proved inefficacy, and

What is she, this isle which ye trample and ravage,
Which ye plough with oppression and reap with
the sword,
But a harp never strung in the hall of a savage,
Or a fair wife embraced by a husband abhorr'd?

II.

The chiefs of the Gael were the people embodied ;
The chiefs were the blossom, the people the root!
Their conquerors, the Normans, high-soul'd, and
high-blooded,
Grew Irish at last from the scalp to the foot.
But ye!—ye are hirelings and satraps, not nobles!
Your slaves they detest you ; your masters, they
scorn !
The river lives on ; but its sun-painted bubbles
Pass quick, to the rapids insensibly borne.

partly from the terrible warning of the French Revolution, those laws were repealed, and the sword of injustice "fatigata, nondum satiata," rested from its labour.—*English Misrule and Irish Misdeeds*, p. 85. MacGlashan and Gill.

THE LAST MAC CARTHMORE.

The chief of the Mac Carthy family, whose ancestors had held dominion in South Desmond ever since the second century, went into exile with James II. The exile spent the last years of his life on an island in the mouth of the Elbe.

ON thy woody heaths, Muskerry—Carbery, on
thy famish'd shore,
Hands hurl'd upwards, wordless wailings, clamour
for Mac Carthymore !

He is gone ; and never, never shall return to wild
or wood

Till the sun burns out in blackness and the moon
descends in blood.

He, of lineage older, nobler, at the latest Stuart's
side

Again had drawn his father's sword for Charles in
blood of traitors dyed ;

Once again the stranger fattens where Mac Carthys
ruled of old,

For a later Cromwell triumphs in the Dutchman's
muddier mould.

Broken boat and barge around him, sea-gulls
 piping loud and shrill,
Sits the chief where bursts the breaker, and
 laments the sea-wind chill;
In a barren, northern island dinn'd by ocean's
 endless roar,
Where the Elbe with all his waters streams be-
 tween the willows hoar.

Earth is wide in hill and valley;—palace courts
 and convent piles
Centuries since received thine outcasts, Ireland,
 oft with tears and smiles :
Wherefore builds this grey-hair'd exile on a rock-
 isle's weedy neck?—
Ocean unto ocean calleth ; inly yearneth wreck to
 wreck !

He and his, his church and country, king and
 kinsmen, house and home,
Wrecks they are like broken galleys strangled by
 the yeasty foam :
Nations past and nations present are or shall be
 'soon as these—
Words of peace to him come only from the breast
 of roaring seas.

Clouds and sea-birds inland drifting o'er the sea-
bar and sand-plain ;
Belts of mists for weeks unshifting ; plunge of de-
vastating rain ;
Icebergs as they pass uplifting agueish gleams
through vapours froze,
These, long years, were thy companions, O thou
last Mac Carthymore !

When a rising tide at midnight rush'd against the
downward stream
Rush'd not then the clans embattled meeting in
the Chieftain's dream ?
When once more that tide exhausted died in mur-
murs towards the main
Died not then once more his slogan ebbing far
o'er hosts of slain ?

Pious river ! let us rather hope the low mono-
tonics
Of thy broad stream seaward toiling and the
willow-bending breeze
Charm'd at times a midday slumber, tranquilized
tempestuous breath,
Music last when harp was broken, requiem sad
and sole in death.

THE REQUITAL.

I.

WE too had our day—it was brief : it is ended—
When a king dwelt among us ; no strange
king but ours :
When the shout of a people delivered ascended
And shook the broad banner that hung on his
towers.
We saw it like trees in a summer breeze shiver ;
We read the gold legend that blazoned it o'er :
“To-day!—now or never ! To-day and forever !”
O God have we seen it to see it no more ?

II.

How fared it that season, our lords and our
masters,
In that spring of our freedom how fared it
with you ?
Did we trample your faith ? Did we mock your
disasters ?
* We restored but his own to the leal and the
true.

* Some erroneous statements made by a recent historian respecting the conduct of the Irish Parliament in the

Ye had fallen ! 'Twas a season of tempest and
troubles :

But against you we drew not that knife ye
had drawn ;

In the war-field we met : but your prelates and
nobles

Stood up 'mid the senate in ermine and lawn !

A SONG OF THE BRIGADE.

I.

“ **W**EEPING ever, maid forlorn,
“ Palid, restless, weeping :

“ Kirtle careless, tresses torn,

“ Lashes wet while sleeping :

“ Tearless ever, grandsire grave,

“ In thy moody mourning !”

—“ My son with Sarsfield crossed the wave,

“ The lost are long returning !”

time of James II., especially as regards the Act of Settlement, are effectually refuted in an article on his History in the *Dublin Review*. In Ireland the Catholic side, when in power, never persecuted. In the days of Queen Mary, the Corporation of Dublin hired seventy houses for English Protestants flying from persecution, and entertained the refugees for a year and a half, as is recorded by Harris, O'Driscoll, and others.

II.

Years passed. Again went by the Bard,
Chains and gibbets braving :
Where blood of old had stained the sward
Summer corn lay waving :
The tempest of a sudden joy
Uplifting stave and stanza,
The valleys echoed "Fontenoy," *
The wild sea-shore "Almanza!"

* "Gentlemen of Ireland," said the French King, at the critical moment, "there stand your enemies!" The charge of the Irish Brigade gained the battle of Fontenoy. "Accursed," exclaimed King George, on hearing of this battle, "be the laws that deprive me of such soldiers!" The Irish Brigade at Fontenoy consisted of the regiments of Clare, Lally, Dillon, Berwick, Roth, and Buckley, with FitzJames' Cavalry. It was commanded by O'Brien, Lord Clare. As the Brigade charged up the hill its war cry was, "Remember Limerick and the Sassanach faith"—an allusion to the violated Treaty.

THE CHANGED MUSIC.

I.

THE shock of meeting clans is o'er :
The knightly or the native shout
Pursues no more, by field or shore,
From rath to cairne, the ruined rout.
O'er dusty stalls old banners trail
In mouldering fanes : while far beneath
At last the Norman and the Gael
Lie wedded in the caves of death.

II.

No more the Bard-song ! dead the strains
That mixed defiance, grief, and laugh :
Old legends haunt no more the plains,
Half saintly and barbaric half.
Changed is the music. Sad and slow
Beyond the horizon's tearful verge
The elegiac wailings flow,
The fragments of the broken dirge.

THE MINSTREL OF THE LATER DAY.

I.

WHAT art thou, O thou loved and lost,
 That, fading from me, leav'st me bare ?
 The last trump of a vanquished host
 Far off expiring on the air
 So cheats in death the listener's ear
 As thou dost cheat this aching heart :—
 To me thy Past looked strangely near ;
 Distant and dim seems that thou art.

II.

O Eire ! the things I loved in thee
 Were dead long years ere I was born :
 Yet still their shadows lived for me,
 An evening twilight like the morn :
 But daily now with vulgarer hand
 The Present sweeps those phantoms by :—
 Like annals of an alien land
 Thy history's self appears to die !

THE IRISH EXILE AT FIESOLE.

I.

HERE to thine exile rest is sweet :
Here, mother-land, thy breath is near him !
Thy pontiff, Donat, raised his seat
On these fair hills that still revere him ;
Like him that thrill'd the Helvetian vale,
St. Gall's, with rock-resounded anthem :
For their sakes honour'd is the Gael :
The peace they gave to men God grant them !

II.

Far down in pomp the Arno winds
By domes the boast of old Religion ;
The eternal azure shining blinds
Serene Ausonia's balmyest region.
* Assunta be her name ! for bright
She sits, assumed 'mid heavenly glories ;—
But ah ! more dear, though dark like night,
To me, my loved and lost Dolores !

* The name *Assunta* is derived from the Feast of the Assumption ; *Dolores* from that of the Seven Dolours.

III.

The mild Franciscans say—and sigh—

“Weep not except for Christ’s sweet Passion !”

They never saw their Florence lie,

Like her I mourn, in desolation !

On this high crest they brood in rest,

The pines their Saint and them embowering,

While centuries blossom round their nest

Like those slow aloes seldom flowering.*

IV.

“Salvete, flores martyrum !”

Such was the Roman Philip’s greeting

In banner’d streets with myrtles dumb

The grave-eyed English college meeting.

There lived an older martyr-land !

All realms revered her—none would aid her ;

Or reaching forth a tardy hand

Enfeebled first, at last betrayed her !

V.

That land men named a younger Rome !

She lit the north with radiance golden ;

Alone survives the catacomb

Of all that Roman greatness olden !

Her Cathall at Tarento sate :

Virgilius ! Saltzburgh was thy mission !

* A species of Aloe is said to flower only once a century.

Who sow'd the Faith fasts long, feasts late ;
 Who reap'd retains unvex'd fruition.

VI.

Peace settles on the whitening hair ;
 The heart that burned grows cold and colder ;
 My resurrection spot is there
 Where yon Etrurian ruins moulder.
 Foot-sore, by yonder pillar's base
 My rest I make, unknown and lowly :
 And teach the legend-loving race
 * To weep a Troy than theirs more holy.

GAIETY IN PENAL DAYS.

BEATI IMMACULATI.

“ **T**HE storm has roar'd by ; and the flowers
 “ reappear :
 “ Like a babe on the battle-field born, the new year
 “ Through wrecks of the forest looks up on clear
 “ skies
 “ With a smile like the windflower's, and violet
 eyes.

* Fiesolè boasted that it had been founded by a remnant escaped from Troy.

" There's warmth in the sunshine ; there's song
 " in the wood :
 " There's faith in the spirit, and life in the blood ;
 " We'll dance though the stranger inherits the soil :
 " We'll sow though we reap not ! For God be the
 " toil ! "

O Earth that renewest thy beautiful youth !
 The meek shall possess thee ! Unchangeable
 Truth !

A childhood thou giv'st us 'mid grey hairs reborn
 As the gates we approach of perpetual morn !

In the halls of their fathers the stranger held feast ;
 Their church was a cave and an outlaw their priest ;
 The birds have their nests and the foxes have
 holes—

What had these ? Like a sunrise God shone in
 their souls !

SONG.

I.

YE trumpets of long-buried hosts
 Peal, peal no longer in mine ears !
 No more afflict me, wailing ghosts
 Of princedoms quell'd and vanished years !

Freeze on my face forbidden tears :
And thou O heart whose hopes are dead,
Sleep well like hearts that sleep in lead,
Embalmed 'mid royal sepulchres.

II.

The stream of old that rolled in blood
A stainless crystal winds to day :
Fresh scions of the branded wood
Detain the flying feet of May :
The linnet chaunts 'mid ruins grey :
The young lambs bound the graves among :—
O Mother land ! he does thee wrong
That with thy playmates scorns to play

DOUBLE-LIVED ;

OR, CROSS AND CROWN.

I.

BEFORE the award, in those bright Halls
That rest upon the rolling spheres,
Like kingly patriarchs God installs
Long-suffering Races proved by years :

They stand, the counterparts sublime
Of shapes that walk this world of woe,
Triumphant there in endless prime
While militant on earth below.

II.

As earth-mists build the snowy cloud
So Spirits risen, that conquered Fate,
Age after age, up-borne in crowd,
That counterpart Assumed create:
Some form the statue's hand or head:
Some add the sceptre or the crown:
'Till the great Image, perfected,
Smiles on its mortal semblance down.

III.

There stand the Nations just in act,
Or cleansed by suffering, cleansed not changed:
They stand of martyr souls compact,
Round heaven's crystalline bastions ranged.
Among those Gods Elect art thou,
My Country—loftier hour by hour!
The earthly Erin bleeds below:
The heavenly reigns and rules in power.

UNA.

I.

THO the knee she stood 'mid rushes,
And the broad, dark stream swept by her :
Smiles went o'er her, smiles and blushes,
As the stranger's barque drew nigh her :
Near to Clonmacnoise she stood :
Shannon passed her roll'd in flood.

II.

At her feet a wolf-hound wrestled
With a bright boy bold as Mars ;
On her breast an infant nestled,
Like to her, but none of hers ;
A golden iris graced her hand—
All her gold was in that wand.

III.

O'er the misty, moorish margin
Frown'd a ruin'd tower afar ;
Some one said, " This peasant virgin
Comes from chieftains great in war !
" Princes once had bow'd before her :
" Now the reeds alone adore her !"

IV.

Refluent dropt (that barque on gliding)
The wave it heaved along the bank :
Like worldings still with fortune siding
The rushes with it backward sank.
Farewell to her ! The rushing river
Must have its way. Farewell forever !

ADDUXIT IN TENEBRIS.

THEY wish thee strong : they wish thee great !
Thy royalty is in thy heart !
Thy children mourn thy widow'd state
In funeral groves. Be what thou art !

Across the world's vainglorious waste,
As o'er Egyptian sands, in thee
God's hieroglyph, His shade is cast—
A bar of black from Calvary.

Around thee many a land and race
Have wealth or sway or name in story ;
But on that brow discrown'd we trace
The crown expiatory.

SONG.

I.

O WOODS that o'er the waters breathe
A sigh that grows from morn till night !
O waters with your voice like death,
And yet consoling in your might ;
Ye draw, ye drag me with a charm,
As when a river draws a leaf,
From silken court and citted swarm
To your cold homes of peace in grief.

II.

In boyhood's flush I trod the shore
When slowly sank a crimson sun
Revealed at moments, hid once more
By rolling mountains, gold or dun :
But now I haunt its marge when day
Has laid his fulgent sceptre by,
And tremble over waters grey
Long windows of a hueless sky.

RELIGIO NOVISSIMA.

THERE is an Order by a northern sea,
Far in the West, of rule and life more
strict
Than that which Basil rear'd in Galilee,
In Egypt Paul, in Umbria Benedict.

Discalced it walks ; a stony land of tombs,
A strange Petraea of late days, it treads !
Within its court no high-tossed censer fumes ;
The night-rain beats its cells, the wind its beds.

Before its eyes no brass-bound, blazon'd tome
Reflects the splendour of a lamp high-hung :
Knowledge is banish'd from her earliest home
Like wealth : it whispers psalms that once it
sung.

It is not bound by the vow celibate,
Lest, through its ceasing, anguish too might
cease ;
In sorrow it brings forth ; and Death and Fate
Watch at Life's gate, and tithe the unripe in-
crease.

It wears not the Franciscan's sheltering gown ;
The cord that binds it is the Stranger's chain :
Searce seen for scorn, in fields of old renown
It breaks the clod ; another reaps the grain.

Year after year it fasts ; each third or fourth
So fasts that common fasts to it are feast ;
Then of its brethren many in the earth
Are laid unrequiem'd like the mountain beast.

Where are its cloisters ? Where the felon sleeps !
Where its novitiate ? Where the last wolf died !
From sea to sea its vigil long it keeps—
Stern Foundress ! is its Rule not mortified ?

Thou that hast laid so many an Order waste,
A Nation is thine Order ! It was thine
Wide as a realm that Order's seed to cast,
And undisputed sustain its discipline !

HOPE IN DEATH.

I.

DESCEND, O Sun, o'er yonder waste,
O'er moors and meads and meadows :
Make gold a world but late o'ercast ;
With purple tinge the shadows !

Thou goest to bless some happier clime
Than ours ; but sinking slowly
To us thou leav'st a hope sublime
Disguised in melancholy.

II.

A Love there is that shall restore
What dreadful Death takes from us ;
A secret Love whose gift is more
Than Faith's authentic promise :
A Love that says, " I hide a while,
" For sense, that blinds, is round you :"—
O well-loved dead ! ere now the smile
Of that great Love has found you !

THE DECREE.

I.

HATE not the oppressor ! He fulfils
Thy destiny decreed, no more :
What cometh, that the Eternal wills :
Be ours to suffer and adore.
O Thou the All-Holy, Thou the All-Just !
Thou fling'st Thy plague upon the blast :
We hide our foreheads 'mid the dust
In penance till the wrath be past.

II.

The nations sink, the nations rise
On the dread fount of endless Being ;
Bubbles that burst beneath the eyes
Of Him the all-shaping and all-seeing.
Thou breath'st, and they are made ! Behold,
Thy breath withdrawn, they melt, they cease :—
Our fathers were Thy saints of old,
Oh grant at last their country peace !

ST. BRIGID OF THE LEGENDS.

A SOFT child-saint she moved, foot-bare,
Amid the kine sweet-breathing,
With boughs, the insect tribe to scare,
Their hornèd foreheads wreathing.

Slowly on her their dark eyes grave
They rolled in sleepy pleasure,
Like things by music charmed, and gave
Their milk in twofold measure.

That hour there passed a beggar clan
Through sultry fields on faring :
“Come drink,” she cried, “from pail and pan !”—
That small hand was unsparing.

In wrath her mother near them drew :—

The pails that late held nothing,
Like fountains tapped foamed up anew,
And buzzed with milk floods frothing !

O Saint, the favourite of the poor,
The afflicted, weak, and weary !
Like Mary's was that face she bore :
Men called her " Erin's Mary."

In triple vision God to her
Revealed her country's story :
She saw the advancing tempests blur,
Then blot, its morning glory.

Kildare of Oaks ! thy quenchless Faith,
Her gift it was : she taught it !
The shroud Saint Patrick wore in death,
'Twas she, 'twas she that wrought it !

Thus sang they on the sunburnt land
Among the stacks of barley ;
And singing, smiled, by breezes fanned
From Erin's dream-land early.

OMENS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

“ The Parliament of England seem to have considered
“ the permanent debility of Ireland as their best security
“ for her connection with the British Crown ; and the
“ Irish Parliament to have rested the security of the
“ colony upon maintaining a perpetual and impassable
“ barrier against the ancient inhabitants of the country.”
Speech of Lord Chancellor Clare.

SOOTHSAYER of the Imperial State,
What saw'st thou in the skies of late ?
I saw a white cloud like a hand :
It held aloft a harp, not brand.

Soothsayer of the Imperial State,
What saw'st thou in the streams of late ?
A pale hand rising from a brook :
It raised a seal'd yet bleeding book.

Soothsayer of the Imperial State,
What saw'st thou on the seas of late ?
I saw ascending Liberty :
Knowledge makes strong, and Commerce free.

Soothsayer of the Imperial State,
 What saw'st thou 'mid the tombs of late?
 I saw Religion upward burst,
 Her last crown lordlier than her first.

Soothsayer of the Imperial State,
 What saw'st thou in the streets of late?
 I saw old foes shake hands and say,
 " One country have we—ours to-day."

Then up with the banner, and on with the steed!
 By the red streets of Wexford—

 (*Soothsayer*) My master, no need!
 We conquer'd them never: our arms they de-
 fied:—
 Here's money: seduce them! here's falsehood:—
 divide!

THE GRAVES.

IN the Cambrian valleys with sea-murmurs
 haunted

 The grave-yards at noontide are fresh with
 dawn-dew;

On the virginal bosom white lilies are planted
 'Mid the monotone whisper of pine-tree and
 yew.

In the dells of Etruria, where all day long war-
bles

The night-bird, the faithful 'mid cloisters re-
pose :

And the long cypress shadow falls black upon
marbles

That cool aching hearts like the Apennines'
snows.

In Ireland, in Ireland the wind ever sighing

Sings alone the death-dirge o'er the just and
the good ;

In the abbeys of Ireland the bones are round
lying

Like blocks where the hewer stands hewing
the wood.

Be the Stranger content with soft glebe and text-
seesaws !

He wars with the dead who usurps the church-
yard !

On the voice which is Jacob's, the hand which is
Esau's,

The ban of the priesthood and people lies hard.

THE CAUSE.

I.

THE kings are dead that raised their swords
In Erin's right of old ;
The bards that dash'd from fearless chords
Her name and praise lie cold :
But fix'd as fate her altars stand ;
Unchanged, like God, her Faith ;
Her Church still holds in equal hand
The keys of life and death.

II.

As well call up the sunken reefs
Atlantic waves rush o'er
As that old time of native chiefs
And Gaelic kings restore !
Things heavenly rise : things earthly sink :—
God works through Nature's laws ;
Sad Isle, 'tis He that bids thee link
Thine Action with thy Cause !

MEMORY.

“**T**HEY are past, the old days :—let the past
“ be forgotten :
“ Let them die, the old wrongs and old woes
“ that were ours,
“ Like the leaves of the winter, down-trampled
“ and rotten,
“ That light in the spring-time the forest with
“ flowers.”

So sings the sweet voice ! But the sad voice
replieth ;
“ Unstaunch’d is the wound while the insult
“ remains ;
“ The Tudor’s black banner above us still flieth ;
“ The Faith of our fathers is spurned in their
“ fanes !

“ Distrust the repentance that clings to its booty !
“ Give the people their Church, and the priest-
“ hood its right :—
“ Till then, to remember the past is a duty,
“ For the past is our Cause, and our Cause is
“ our might.”

ODE TO ETHNEA READING HOMER.

A H happy he who shaped the words
Which bind thee in their magic net ;
Who draws from those old Grecian chords
The harmonies that charm thee yet !

Who waves from that illumined brow
The dark locks back ;—upon that cheek
Pallid crewhile as Pindan snow
Makes thus the Pindan morning break !

'Tis he that fringes lids depress'd
With lashes heavier for a tear,
And shakes that inexperienced breast
With womanhood. Upon the bier

Lies cold in death the hope of Troy ;
'Thou hear'st the elders sob around,
The widow'd wife, the orphan'd boy,
The old grey king, the realm discrown'd.

Hadst thou but lived that hour, by thee
Well wept had been the heroic dead ;
The heroic hands well kissed ; thy knee
Had propp'd the pallid princely head !

From thee Andromache had caught
Dirges more sweet ; and she who burn'd
With anguish born of shame, a note
Of holier woe from thee had learn'd !

Al! child ! Thy Troy in ruin lies
Like theirs ! Her princes too are cold :
Again Cassandra prophecies,
Vainly prophetic as of old.

Brandon to Ida's clondy verge
Responds. Iorras' kingless shore
Wails like the Lycian when its marge
Saintly Sarpedon trod no more.

Not Gods benign, like Sleep and Death
Who bore that shepherd-monarch home,
But famine's tooth and fever's breath
Our exiles hunt o'er ocean's foam.

Peace reigns in heaven. The Fates each hour
Roll round earth's wheel through darkness vast ;
Abides alone the Poet's power,
A manlike Art that from the past

Draws forth that line whose sanguine track
The wicked fear, the weak desert ;
That clue through centuries leading back
The patriot to his country's heart.

THE LONG DYING.

THE dying tree no pang sustains ;
But, by degrees relinquishing
Companionship of beams and rains,
Forgets the balmy breath of Spring.

From off th' enringèd trunk that keeps
His annual count of ages gone,
Th' embrace of Summer slowly slips ;—
Still stands the giant in the sun.

His myriad lips, that suck'd of old
The dewy breasts of heaven, are dry ;
His roots remit the crag and mould ;
Yet painless is his latest sigh.

He falls ; the forests round him roar ;—
Ere long on quiet bank and copse
Untrembling moonbeams rest ; once more
The startled babe his head down-drops.

But ah for one who never drew
From age to age a painless breath !
And ah the old wrong ever new !
And ah the many-centuried death !

A BARD'S LOVE.

I.

I THOUGHT it was thy voice I heard ;
Ah no ! the ripple burst and died ;
Among cold reeds the night-wind stirr'd ;
The yew-tree sigh'd ; the earliest bird
Answer'd the white dawn far desried.

II.

I thought it was a tress of thine
That grazed my cheek, and touch'd my brow ;—
Ah no ! in sad but calm decline
'Twas but my ever grapeless vine
Slow-waving from the blighted bough.

III.

O Eire, it is not ended ! Soon
Or late thy flower renews its bud !
In sunless quarries still unhewn
Thy statue sleeps ; thy sunken moon
Shall light once more the autumnal flood !

IV.

Memory for me her hands but warms
O'er ashes of thy greatness gone ;
Or lifts to heaven phantasmal arms,
Muttering of talismans and charms
And grappling after glories flown.

V.

Sleep, sleep, thou worn out palimpsest !
She lives ! man's troubles soon are o'er :—
When in dark crypts my relics rest
Star-high shall shine my Country's crest,
Where birds of darkness cannot soar !

UNREVEALED.

GREY Harper, rest !—O maid, the Fates
On those sad lips have press'd their seal !
Thy song's sweet rage but indicates
That mystery it can ne'er reveal.

Take comfort ! Vales and lakes and skies,
Blue seas, and sunset-girded shore,
Love-beaming brows, love-lighted eyes,
Contend like thee. What can they more ?

SONG.

I.

A CONQUEROR stood upon Shanid's brow
And, "build me aloft," he cried,
"A castle to rule o'er the meads below
"From the hills to the ocean's side!"
In green Ardineer, far down, alone
A beggar girl sang her song,
A sorrowful dirge for a roof o'er-thrown
And a fire stamped out by wrong.

II.

The beggar girl's song in the wind was drowned :
A moment it lived : no more.
The conqueror's castle went back to the ground,
Went back after centuries four :
The great halls crumbled from roof to moat ;
The grey keep alone remains :
But echoes still of the sad song float
All over the lonely plains.

ST. BRIGID OF THE CONVENTS.

SHE looked not on the face of man :
Nor husband hers, nor brother :
But where she passed the children ran
And hailed that maid their mother !

In haste she fled soft mead and grove,
For Virtue's region hilly :
They called her, 'mid the birds, the Dove,
Amid the flowers, the Lily.

In woods of Oriel—Leinster's vales—
Her convent homes she planted ;
And Erin's cloistered nightingales
Their nocturns darkling chaunted.

By many a Scottish moorland wide,
By many an English river,
Men loved of old their "good Saint Bride ;"
But Erin loves forever !

A sword went forth : thy fanes they burn'd !
Sweet Saint, no angers fret thee !—
There are that ne'er thy grace have spurn'd :
There are that ne'er forget thee !

Thus sang they while the autumnal glade
Exchanged green leaf for golden ;
And later griefs were lighter made
By thought of glories olden.

IN FAR LANDS.

I SEE, I see the domes ascend,
O Seville o'er thy Guadalquiver :
I see thy breeze-touched cypress bend ;
I hear thy moonlit palm grove shiver.

I know that honour here to those
Who suffered for the Faith is given ;
I know, I know that earthly woes
Are secret blessings crowned in heaven :

But ah ! against Dunluce's crags
To watch our green sea-billows swelling !
And ah ! once more to hear the stags
In Coona's stormy oakwoods belling !

THE HERMIT'S COUNSEL.

I.

THUS spake the hermit : count it gain,
The scoff, the stab, the freezing fear :
Expiate on earth thine earthly stain ;
The fire that cleanseth, find it here !
Nearest we stand to heavenly light
When girt with Purgatorial glooms :
That Church which crowns the Roman height,
For ages trod the Catacombs !

II.

But when thy God His hand withdraws,
And all things round seem glad and fair,
Unchallenged Faith, impartial laws,
And wealth, and honour, then beware !
Beware lest sin in splendour deck'd
Make null the years of holy sighs,
And God's great people, grief-elect,
Her birthright scorning, miss the prize.

EVENING MELODY.

FRESH eve, that hang'st in yon blue sky
On breeze-like pinions swaying,
And leav'st our earth reluctantly—
Ah, hang there, long delaying!

Along the beach the ripples rake ;
Dew-drench'd the thicket flushes :
And last year's leaves in bower and brake
Are dying 'mid their blushes.

Is this the world we knew of yore,
Long bound in wintry whiteness,
Which here consummates more and more
This talismanic brightness?

To music wedded, well-known lines
Let forth a hidden glory :
Thus, bathed in sunset, swells and shines,
Lake, wood, or promontory. ;

New Edens pure from Adam's crime
Invite the just to enter ;
The spheres of wrong-ful Life and Time
Grow lustrous to their centre.

Rejoice, glad planet ! Sin and Woe,
The void, the incompleteness,
Shall cease at last ; and thou shalt know
The mystery of thy greatness !

CARO REQUIESCET.

LOOK forth, O Sun, with beam oblique
O'er crags and lowlands mellow ;
The dusky beech-grove fire, and strike
The sea-green larch-wood yellow.

All round the deep, new-flooded meads
Send thy broad glories straying ;
Each herd that feeds 'mid flowers and weeds
In golden spoils arraying.

Flash from the river to the bridge,
Red glance with glance pursuing ;
Fleet from low sedge to mountain ridge,
Whatever thou dost undoing !

Kiss with moist lip those vapoury bands
That swathe yon slopes of tillage ;
Clasp with a hundred sudden hands
The gables of yon village.

But oh, thus sharpening to a point,
 Oh, brightening thus while dying,
 Ere yet thou diest the graves anoint
 Where my beloved are lying !

Ye shades that mount the moorland dells,
 Ascend, the tree tops dimming ;
 But leave those amethystine hills
 Awhile in glory swimming !

THE SECRET OF POWER.

DARK, dark that grove at the Attic gate
 By the sad Eumenides haunted,
 * Where the Theban King in his blindness sat,
 While the nightingales round him chaunted !

In a grove as dark of cypress and bay
 Upgrown to a forest's stature,
 In vision I saw at the close of day
 A woman of God-like feature.

She stood like a queen, and her vesture green
 Shone out as a laurel sun-lighted ;
 And she sang a wild song like a mourner's *keen*
 With an angel's triumph united.

* Œdipus.—See "Sophocles' Œdipus Coloneus."

She sang like one whose grief is done ;
Who has solved Life's dread enigma ;—
A beam from the sun on her brow was thrown,
And I saw there the conquering Stigma.

EVENING MELODY.

OH that the pines which crown yon steep
Their fires might ne'er surrender !
Oh that yon fervid knoll might keep,
While lasts the world, its splendour !

Pale poplars on the breeze that lean,
And in the sunset shiver,
Oh that your golden stems might screen
For aye yon glassy river !

That yon white bird on homeward wing
Soft-sliding without motion,
And now in blue air vanishing
Like snow-flake lost in ocean,

Beyond our sight might never flee,
Yet forward still be flying ;
And all the dying day might be
Immortal in its dying !

Pellucid thus in saintly trance,
Thus mute in expectation,
What waits the earth? Deliverance?
Ah no! Transfiguration!

She dreams of that new earth divine,
Conceived of seed immortal;
She sings "Not mine the holier shrine,
"Yet mine the steps and portal!"

ARBOR NOBILIS.

I.

LIKE a cedar our greatness arose from the
earth;

Or a plane by some broad-flowing river;
Like arms that give blessing its boughs it put
forth:

We thought it would bless us for ever.
The birds of the air in its branches found rest;
The old lions couched in its shadow;
Like a cloud o'er the sea hung its pendulous
crest;

It murmur'd for leagues o'er the meadow.

II.

Was a worm at its root? Was it lightning that
charr'd

What age after age had created ?

Not so ! 'Twas the merchant its glory that marr'd,
And the malice that, fearing it, hated.

Its branches lie splinter'd; the hollow trunk groans
Like a church that survives profanations ;

But the leaves, scatter'd far when the hurricane
moans,

For the healing are sent of the nations !

THE "OLD LAND."

I.

A H kindly and sweet, we must love thee perforce !
The disloyal, the coward alone would not
love thee :

Ah mother of heroes ! strong mother ! soft nurse !

We are thine while the large cloud swims on-
ward above thee !

By thine hills ever-blue that draw heaven so near ;

By thy cliffs, by thy lakes, by thine ocean-lull'd
highlands ;

And more—by thy records disastrous and dear,

The shrines on thy headlands, the cells in thine
islands !

II.

Ah, well sings the thrush by Lixnau and Traigh-li!

Ah, well breaks the wave upon Umbhall and
Brandon!

Thy breeze o'er the upland blows clement and free,
And o'er fields, once his own, which the hind
must abandon.

A caitiff the noble who draws from thy plains
His all, yet reveres not the source of his great-
ness;

A clown and a serf 'mid his boundless domains
His spirit consumes in the prison of his straight-
ness!

III.

Through the cloud of its pathos thy face is more
fair:

In old time thou wert sun-clad; the gold robe
thou worest!

To thee the heart turns as the deer to her lair,
Ere she dies, her first bed in the gloom of the
forest.

Our glory, our sorrow, our mother! Thy God
In thy worst dereliction forsook but to prove
thee:—

Blind, blind as the blindworm; cold, cold as the clod
Who, seeing thee, see not, possess but not love
thee!

GRATTAN.

I.

GOD works through man, not hills or snows !
In man, not men, is the God-like power ;
The man, God's potentate, God foreknows ;

He sends him strength at the destined hour.
His Spirit He breathes into one deep heart :
His cloud He bids from one mind depart :
A Saint !—and a race is to God re-born !
A Man ! One man makes a nation's morn !

II.

A man, and the blind land by slow degrees .
Gains sight ! A man, and the deaf land hears !
A man, and the dumb land like wakening seas
Thunders low dirges in proud, dull ears !
One man, and the People, a three days' corse,
Stands up, and the grave-bands fall off perforce ;
One man, and the nation in height a span
To the measure ascends of the perfect man.

III.

Thus wept unto God the land of Eire :

Yet there rose no man and her hope was dead :
In the ashes she sat of a burn'd-out fire ;

And sackcloth was over her queenly head.
But a man in her latter days arose ;
A deliverer stepp'd from the camp of her foes :
He spake ; the great and the proud gave way,
And the dawn began which shall end in day !

THE SECRET JOY.

OH blithesome at times is life perforce
When Death is the gate of Hope not Fear ;
Rich streams lie dumb ; over rough stones course
The runlets that charm the ear.

“ Her heart is hard ; she can laugh,” they say,
“ That light one can jest who has cause to sigh !”
Her conscience is light ; and with God are they
She loves :—they are safe and nigh.

God's light shines brightest on cheeks grief-pale !
The song of the darkling is sad and dark :—
That proud one boasts of her nightingale !
Oh Eire, keep thou thy lark !

INSIGHT.

SHARP lie the shades on the sward close-bitten
Which the affluent meadows receive but
half;

Truth lies clear-edged on the soul grief-smitten,
Congeal'd there in epitaph.

A Vision is thine by the haughty lost;
An Insight reserved for the sad and pure:—
On the mountain cold in the grey hoar frost
Thy Shepherd's track lies sure!

SONG.

THE little Black Rose shall be red at last!
What made it black but the East wind
dry,

And the tear of the widow that fell on it fast?
It shall redden the hills when June is nigh!

The Silk of the Kine shall rest at last!
What drove her forth but the dragon-fly?

In the golden vale she shall feed full fast
With her mild gold horn, and her slow dark
eye.

The wounded wood-dove lies dead at last :
The pine long-bleeding, it shall not die !
—This song is secret. Mine ear it pass'd
In a wind o'er the stone plain of Athenry.

THE CLUE.

TO one in dungeons bound there came
The last long night before he died
An Angel garlanded with flame
Who raised his hand and prophesied :

“ Thy life hath been a dream : but lo !
“ This night thine eyes shall see the truth :—
“ That which thou thoughtest weal was woe ;
“ And that was joy thou thoughtest ruth.

“ Thy land hath conquer'd through her loss ;
“ With her God's chief of Creatures plain'd,
“ The same who scal'd of old the Cross
“ When Mary's self beneath remain'd.*

* Dante's description of Holy Poverty.

“ Well fought’st thou on the righteous side :

“ Yet, being dust, thou wroughtest sin :

“ Once—twice—thy hand was raised in pride :

“ The promised land thou may’st not win ;

“ But they, thy children shall.” Next morn

Around the Patriot-martyr press’d

A throng that cursed him. He in turn,

The sentenced, bless’d them—and was bless’d.

ODE ON THE FIRST REPEAL OF THE PENAL LAWS.

A.D. 1778.

I.

THE hour has struck ! at last in heaven

The golden shield an angel smites !

On Erin’s altars thunder-riven

A happier Destiny alights.

’Tis done that cannot be undone :

The lordlier ages have begun ;

The flood that widens as it flows

Is loosed ; fulfilled the Triple Woes !*

* See page 3.

II.

Once more the Faith uplifts her forehead
Star-circled to the starry skies :
Fangless at last, a snake abhorred,
Beneath her foot Oppression lies :
Above the waning moon of Time
The Apparition stands sublime,
From hands immaculate, hands of light,
Down scattering gifts of saintly might.

III.

Long for her martyrs Erin waited :
They came at last. Rejoice this hour
Ye tonsured heads, or consecrated,
That sank beneath the stony shower !
Once more shall rise the Minster porch ;
Once more shall laugh the village church
O'er plains that yield the autumnal feast
Once more to Industry released !

IV.

Again the wells of ancient knowledge
Shall cheer the dusty lip and dry :
Again waste places, fane and college,
The radiance wear of days gone by !
Again shall glance the shafts of wit ;
Glad streams of song their dances knit ;
Arts exiled long their light relume ;
Old music haunt the storied tomb !

V.

Once more the far sea-tide returneth
And feeds the rivers of the Land :
Once more her heart maternal yearneth
With hopes the growth of memories grand.
Immortal longings swell her breast
Quickened from dust of saints at rest :
Once more six centuries bud and flower
To make the triumph of this hour !

VI.

Fair Land ! the Power that shared thy sadness,
That wept with thee for many a year,
On thee the glory of her gladness
Will shower, thy ruined walls uprear !
In all thy shipless harbours glassed
High-bannered fleets their glow shall cast ;
And Greatness, child of Virtue, wait,
With Honour, stationed at thy gate.

VII.

Like sounds to music changed by distance
Old wars but sports of youth will seem ;
The aggression dire, the wild resistance
Put on the moonlight of a dream.
Ah gentle Foes ! if *wholly* past
The Wrong, we might be friends at last !
—Thou, Thou that rul'st the peace, the war,
Keep us but Thine for-ever-more !

VIII.

Let others trust in trade and traffic !

Be ours to work, yet trust in Thee !

Cherubic Wisdom, Love Seraphic

Beseem the land the Truth makes free.

Th' earth-quelling sword let others vaunt :

Be ours for loftier crowns to pant

'Than flesh can give or time destroy—

'The Apostles' Crown of Faith and Joy !

IX.

Teach us, O God,—our Penance ended—

To clasp the lessons that remain :

Never be Erin's triumph blended

With pride, or vengeance, or disdain.

True let us be to them that died

The liegemen of the Crucified ;

But true, not less, to love, nor base

To scoff a brother's creed or race.

ALL-HALLOWS ;

OR, THE MONK'S DREAM.

A PROPHECY.

I.

I TROD once more the place of tombs :
Death-rooted elder, full in flower,
Oppress'd me with its sad perfumes,
Pathetic breath of arch and tower.
The ivy on the cloister wall
Waved, gusty with a silver gleam :
The moon sank low ; the billows' fall
In moulds of music shaped my dream.

II.

In sleep a funeral chaunt I heard,
A "de profundis" far below ;
On the long grass the rain-drops stirr'd
As when the distant tempests blow.
Then slowly, like a heaving sea,
The graves were troubled all around ;
And two by two, and three by three,
The monks ascended from the ground.

III.

From sin absolved, redeem'd from tears
There stood they, beautiful and calm,
The brethren of a thousand years,
With lifted brows and palm to palm !
On heaven they gazed in holy trance ;
Low stream'd their aged tresses hoar :
And each transfigured countenance
The Benedictine impress bore.

IV.

By angels borne the Holy Rood
Encircled thrice the church-yard bound ;
They paced behind it, paced in blood,
With bleeding feet, but foreheads crown'd ;
And thrice they sang that hymn benign
Which angels sang when Christ was born ;
And thrice I wept, ere yet the brine
Shook with the first white flakes of morn.

V.

Down on the earth my brows I laid ;
In these, His saints, I worshipp'd God :
And then return'd that grief which made
My heart since youth a frozen clod.
“ O ye,” I wept, “ whose woes are past,
Behold these prostrate shrines and stones !
To these can Life return at last ?
Can Spirit lift once more these bones ?”

VI.

The smile of Him the end who knows
Went luminous o'er them as I spake ;
Their white locks shone like mountain snows
O'er which the orient mornings break :
They stood : they pointed to the West :
And lo ! where darkness late had lain
Rose many a kingdom's citted crest
Reflected in a kindling main !

VII.

“ Not only these, the fanes o'erthrown,
“ Shall rise,” they said, “ but myriads more ;
“ The seed—far hence by tempests blown—
“ Still sleeps on yon expectant shore.
“ Send forth, sad Isle, thy reaper bands !
“ Assert and pass thine old renown :
“ Not here alone—in farthest lands
“ For thee thy sons shall weave the crown.”

VIII.

They spake ; and like a cloud down sank
The just and filial grief of years ;
And I that peace celestial drank
Which shines but o'er the seas of tears.
Thy Mission flashed before me plain,
O thou by many woes anneal'd !
And I discern'd how axe and chain
Had thy great destinies sign'd and seal'd !

IX.

That seed which grows must seem to die ;—
In thee when earthly hope was none,
The heaven-born faith of days gone by,
By martyrdom matured, lived on ;
Conceal'd, like limbs of royal mould
'Neath some Egyptian pyramid,
Or statued shape in cities old
Below Vesuvian ashes hid.

X.

For this cause by a power divine
Each temporal aid was frustrated :
Tirone, Tirconnell, Geraldine—
In vain they fought ; in vain they bled :
Successive, 'neath th' usurping hand
Sank ill-starr'd Mary, erring James :—
Nor Spain nor France might wield the brand
Which, for her own, Religion claims !

XI.

Arise, long stricken ! mightier far
Are they that fight for God and thee
Than those who head the adverse war !
Sad prophet ! lift thy face and see !
Behold with eyes no longer wrong'd
By mists the sense exterior breeds,
The hills of heaven around thee throng'd
With fiery chariots and with steeds !

XII.

The years baptized in blood are thine ;
The exile's prayer from many a strand ;
The woes of those this hour who pine
Poor outcasts on their native land ;
Angels and saints from heaven down-bent
Watch thy long conflict without pause ;
And the most Holy Sacrament
From all thine altars pleads thy cause !

XIII.

O great through Suffering, rise at last
Through kindred Action tenfold great !
Thy future calls on thee thy past
(Its *soul* survives) to consummate !
Let women weep ; let children moan :
Rise, men and brethren, to the fight :
One cause hath Earth, and one alone :
For it, the cause of God, unite !

XIV.

Hope of my country ! House of God !
All-Hallows ! Blessed feet are those
By which thy courts shall yet be trod
Once more as ere the spoiler rose !
Blessed the winds that waft them forth
To victory o'er the rough sea foam ;
That race to God which conquers earth—
Can God forget that race at home ?

HYMN.

THE CHURCH.

I.

WHO is She that stands triumphant
Rock in strength upon the Rock,
Like some city crown'd with turrets
Braving storm and earthquake shock ?
Who is she her arms extending ;
Blessing thus a world restored ;
All the anthems of creation
Lifting to creation's Lord ?
Hers the Kingdom, hers the Sceptre !
Fall ye nations at her feet !
Hers that Truth whose fruit is freedom ;
Light her yoke ; her burden sweet.

II.

As the moon its splendour borrows
From a sun unseen all night
So from Christ, the Sun of Justice,
Draws His Church her vestal light.
Touch'd by His her hands have healing,
Bread of Life, absolving Key :—
Christ Incarnate is her Bridegroom ;
The Spirit hers ; His Temple she.

Hers the Kingdom, hers the Sceptre !
Fall ye nations at her feet !
Hers that Truth whose fruit is freedom ;
Light her yoke ; her burden sweet !

III.

Empires rise and sink like billows ;
Vanish and are seen no more ;
Glorious as the star of morning
She o'erlooks their wild uproar.
Hers the household all-embracing,
Hers the vine that shadows earth ;
Blest thy children, mighty Mother !
Safe the stranger at thy hearth !
Hers the Kingdom, hers the Sceptre !
Fall ye nations at her feet !
Hers that Truth whose fruit is freedom ;
Light her yoke ; her burden sweet !

IV.

Like her Bridegroom, heavenly, human,
Crown'd and militant in one,
Chaunting Nature's great Assumption
And the abasement of the Son ;
Her magnificats, her dirges
Harmonize the jarring years ;
Hands that fling to heaven the censer
Wipe away the orphan's tears.

Hers the Kingdom, hers the Sceptre !
Fall ye nations at her feet !
Hers that Truth whose fruit is freedom ;
Light her yoke ; her burden sweet !

SONG.

I.

While autumn flashed from woods of gold
Her challenge to the setting sun,
And storm-clouds, breaking, seaward rolled
O'er brightening waves, their passion done,
The linnets on a rain-washed beech
So thronged I saw not branch for bird :
My skill is scant in forest speech ;
But thus they sang, or thus I heard.

II.

" 'Tis all a dream—the wrong, the strife,
The scorn, the blow, the loss, the pain !
Immortal Gladness, Love and Life
Alone are lords by right and reign :
The Earth is tossed about as though
Young angels tossed a cowslip ball :
But, rough or level, high or low,
What matters ? God is all in all."

IRISH AIRS.

I.

ON darksome hills thy songs I hear :—
Nor growths they seem of minstrel art
Nor wanderers from Urania's sphere,
But voices from thine own deep heart !
They seem thine own sad oracles
Not uttered by thy sons but thee,
Like waters forced through stony cells
Or winds from cave and hollow tree.

II.

From thee what forced them ? Futile quest !
What draws to widowed eyes the tears ?
The milk to Rachel's childless breast ?
The blood to wounds unstaunched of years ?
Long cling the storm-drops—cling yet shake—
On cypress spire and cedar's fan :
Long rust upon the guilty brake
The heart-drops of the murdered man.

THE DESTINED HOUR.

I.

THE Hour must come. Long since, and now
The shaft decreed is on the wing :
Loosed from the Eternal Archer's bow
The flying fate shall pierce the ring :
The hour that comes to seal the right :
The hour that comes to judge the wrong :
To lift the vales, and thunder-smite
Those cliffs the full-gorged eagles throng.

II.

Rejoice, Elect of Isles! Rejoice
Pale image of the Church of God !
Like her afflicted, lift thy voice
Like her, and hail, and hymn the rod !
Thou warr'st on earth : at each new groan
Thy heavenly guardian claps his hands ;
And glitters o'er the expectant Throne
A crown inwoven of angel bands !

THE CHANGE.

I.

WAS it Truth ; was it Vision ? The old year
was dying ;
Clear rang the last chime from the turret of
stone ;
The mountain hung black o'er the village low-
lying ;
O'er the moon, rushing onward, loose vapours
were blown ;
When I saw an angelical choir with bow'd faces
Wafting on, like a bier, upon pinions outspread
An angel-like Form that of death wore no traces ;
Without pain she had died in her sleep ; but
was dead.

II.

Was it Truth ; was it Vision ? The darkness was
riven ;
Once more through the infinite breast of pure
night
From heaven there look'd downward, more beau-
teous than heaven,
A visage whose sadness was lost in its light :—

“ Why seek'st thou, my son, 'mid the dead for the
“ living ?

“ Thy Country is ris'n, and lives on in thy
“ Faith ;

“ I died but to live ; and now, Life and Life-giving,

“ Where'er the Cross triumphs I conquer in
“ death.”

SEMPER EADEM.

I.

THE moon, freshly risen from the bosom of
 , ocean,

Hangs o'er it suspended, all mournful yet bright;
And a yellow sea-circle with yearning emotion

Swells up as to meet it, and clings to its light :
The orb unabiding grows whiter, mounts higher ;

The pathos of darkness descends on the brine—
O Erin ! the North drew its light from thy pyre ;

Thy light woke the nations ; the embers were
thine !

II.

'Tis sunrise ! The mountains flash forth ; and
new-redden'd, .

The billows grow lustrous, so lately forlorn ;

From the orient with vapours long darken'd and
deaden'd

The trumpets of Godhead are pealing the morn;
He rises, the Sun, in his might re-ascending ;

Like an altar beneath him lies blazing the sea !
O Erin ! Who proved thee returns to thee, blend-
ing

The future and past in one garland for thee !

Epilogue.

WITH spices and urns they come : ah me
how sorrow can babble !

Nothing abides save Love ; and to Love comes
gladness at last :

Sad was the legend and sweet ; but its truth was
mingled with fable ;

Dire was the conflict and long ; but the rage
off the conflict is past.

They are past, the three great Woes ; and the
days of the dread Desolation ;

To amethyst changed are the stones blood
stain'd of the temple-floor ;

A Spiritual Power she lives who seem'd to die as
a Nation ;

Her story is that of a Soul ; and the story of
earth is no more.

Endurance it was that won—Suffering, than
Action thrice greater ;

For Suffering humbly *acts* Away with sigh
and with tear!

She has gone before you and waits : She has gifts
for the blinded who hate her ;

And that bright Shape by the death-cave in
music answers, “Not here.”

NOTES.

“ *The interior life of a nation,*” p. xxvii, Preface.

“ A NATION has its inward life no less than an individual, and from this its outward life also is characterised. For what does a nation effect by war, but either the securing of its existence or the increasing of its power? We honour the heroism shewn in accomplishing these objects; but power, nay, even existence, are not ultimate ends; the question may be asked of every created being why he should live at all, and no satisfactory answer can be given, if his life does not, by doing God's will, consciously or unconsciously tend to God's glory and to the good of his brethren. And if a nation's annals contain the record of deeds ever so heroic, done in defence of the national freedom or existence, still we may require that the freedom or the life so bravely maintained should be also employed for worthy purposes; or else even the names of Thermopylæ and of Morgarten become in after years a reproach rather than a glory.”—
DR. ARNOLD'S *Lectures on Modern History*, p. 11.

“ *Not so, by the Race our Dalriada planted,*” p. 6.

Recording this great Irish settlement, Sir W. Scott writes thus (*Hist. of Scotland*, p. 7, vol. I.):—“ In the fifth century there appear in North Britain two

“powerful and distinct tribes, who are not before named
 “in history. These were the Picts and the Scots. * *
 “The Scots on the other hand were of Irish origin ; for,
 “to the great confusion of ancient history, the inha-
 “bitants of Ireland, those at least of the conquering and
 “predominating caste, were called Scots. A colony of
 “these Irish Scots, distinguished by the name of Dalriads,
 “or Dalrendini, natives of Ulster, had early attempted a
 “settlement on the coast of Argyleshire ; they finally
 “established themselves there under Fergus, the son of
 “Eric, about the year 503, and, recruited by colonies
 “from Ulster, continued to multiply and increase until
 “they formed a nation which occupied the western side
 “of Scotland.” * * * (p. 11, vol. I.) “A much
 “more important struggle, then, than that between the
 “Saxons and the Picts was maintained between the
 “latter nation and the Scoto-Irish inhabiting, as we
 “have seen, the western, as the Picts held the eastern,
 “side of the Island. It was indeed evident that until
 “these two large portions of North Britain should be
 “united under one government the security of the
 “country against foreign invaders was not to be relied
 “on. After many desperate battles, much effusion of
 “blood, and a merciless devastation of both countries,
 “some measures seem to have been taken for settling
 “a lasting peace betwixt these contending nations.
 “Urgaria, sister of Ungus, King of Picts, was married
 “to Aycha IV., King of Scots, and their son Alpine,
 “succeeding his father as King of Scots, flourished from
 “833 to 836, in which last year he was slain, urging
 “some contests in Galloway. The Pictish throne, thus
 “thrown open for want of an heir male, was claimed by
 “Kenneth, son and successor of Alpine, who, as de-

“scended from Urgaria, the sister of Ungus, urged his
 “right of inheritance with an army. Wrad, the last of
 “the Pictish monarchs, died at Forteviot, in 842, fight-
 “ing in defence of his capital and kingdom, and the
 “Pictish people were subdued. * * * So complete
 “must have been the revolution, that the very language
 “of the Picts is lost, and what language they spoke is a
 “subject of doubt to antiquarians. * * * When
 “Kenneth Mac Alpine joined in his person the crowns
 “both of the Picts and Scots, he became an adversary
 “fit to meet and match with the warlike Saxons. The
 “country united under his sway, was then called for the
 “first time Scotland. * * * Kenneth Mac Alpine
 “was the twenty-ninth in descent from Fergus, son of
 “Eric, the first of the race.”

“*Of our three great Bishops in Lindisfarne Isle,*” p. 26.

The testimony of the Venerable Bede respecting the
 Irish missions in England and Scotland, especially those
 of the monks from Iona, is not only interesting in itself,
 but singularly touching from the picture which it presents
 of friendship between two nations in later times so con-
 stantly at variance. He tells us how King Oswald, of
 Northumbria, who had himself at an earlier period found
 a refuge in Ireland, sent thither for missionaries; how
 St. Aidan came at his prayer; how, while the Saint
 preached, the King interpreted his discourses; how Aidan
 was made bishop of Lindisfarne, and was succeeded there
 by St. Finian and St. Colman, also Irish monks. He tells
 us how the Irish monk, Columba, was the first preacher of
 Christianity among the Picts to the north of the moun-
 tains. He tells us how, at a later time, Adannan, one of

St. Columba's successors at Iona, and, thirteen years afterwards, the Irish clergy at Iona, and many elsewhere, adopted the later Roman time for celebrating Easter, which had been introduced into England by the Anglo-Saxon mission of Augustine, but had at first been resisted as an innovation, both by the Irish clergy, and by such priests of the early British church (founded, as he records, by missionaries sent from Pope Eleutherus) as survived notwithstanding the rage of the Saxons. His expressions on this subject are striking. This correction, in the Irish, of those two points relating to discipline in which alone they erred, he says, "appears to have been accomplished by a wonderful dispensation of the Divine goodness, to the end that the *same nation* which had willingly and without envy communicated to the *English people* the knowledge of the true Deity, should afterwards, by means of the English nation, be brought, where they were defective, to the true rule of life. Even, as on the contrary, the Britons, who would not acquaint the English with the knowledge of the Christian faith, now, when the English people enjoy the true faith, and are thoroughly instructed in its rules, continue inveterate in their errors, *expose their heads without a crown, and keep the solemnity of Christ without the society of the Church.*" The mode of making the tonsure was the second point in dispute.

Bede is copious in his references also to the continental missions of the Irish, as well as to the multitudes of English, and others, who retired to Ireland "either for the sake of divine studies, or of a more continent life." The early Irish usage, as regards the time for celebrating Easter, was not, as is often inaccurately stated, the Oriental usage, but one originally practised at

Rome, whence, as Bede tells us, Palladius was sent to the Irish "that believed in Christ to be their bishop, A.D. 431." The Irish were at first very naturally reluctant to change even a matter of discipline which they associated with their earlier saints; but this opposition, as Bede tells us, gave way gradually to argument, to a desire to be at one mind with the rest of the Church, and to their respect for the Holy See. He says that the "Scoti" "which dwell in the south of Ireland had long since, by the admonition of the Apostolic See, learned to observe Easter according to the canonical customs." The Irish he invariably calls by their name of "Scoti."

"*The Days of Outlawry*," p. 54.

It is thus that Sir John Davies, an authority not likely to be prejudiced in favour of the Irish, comments on this state of things:—"As long as they (the Irish) were out of the protection of the law, so as every Englishman might oppress, spoil, and kill them without controlment, how was it possible they should be other than outlaws and enemies to the crown of England? If the king would not admit them to the condition of his subjects, how could they learn to acknowledge and obey him as their sovereign? * * * In a word, if the English would neither in peace govern them by the law, nor in war root them out by the sword, must they not needs be pricks in their eyes, and thorns in their sides, till the world's end?"—DAV. *Disc.*

"*Brave Art Mac Murrough! Arise 'Tis Morn*," p. 71.

The unconquerable King of Leinster. Though his territories were surrounded by the Norman Settlements,

he maintained their independence against all the efforts of the Lords of the Pale, and of the Lord Justices. King Richard II. marched against him to Kilkenny, but succeeded in nothing more than burning the villages in the forests. Richard swore by St. Edward that he would not depart out of Ireland till he had Mac Murrough in his hands, dead or alive ; but his attempt cost him his kingdom, as the Usurper, Henry IV., took advantage of his absence from England to dethrone him. The Irish king is thus described by a French chronicler, Creton, who accompanied Richard. "From a mountain between two woods we saw Mac Murrough descending, accompanied by multitudes of the Irish, and mounted upon a horse, without a saddle, which cost him, it was reported, 400 cows. His horse was fair, and in his descent from the hill to us, ran as swiftly as any stag, hare, or the swiftest beast I have seen. In his right hand he bore a long spear, which, when near the spot where he was to meet the Earl, he cast from him with much dexterity. The crowd that followed him then remained behind, while he advanced to meet the Earl near a small brook. He was tall of stature, well composed, strong, and active ; his countenance fierce and cruel." Richard II. effected little in Ireland, beyond conferring the titles of Duke of Ireland and Marquess of Dublin upon Robert de Vere, Earl of Oxford, his favourite. * *

"The Arraignment," p. 131.

The bards were often sent as ambassadors by Irish princes and chiefs. A curious illustration of these missions is recorded in the Lambeth papers. Mac Gillpatrick had sent his bard to Henry VIII., to com-

plain of the conduct of Ormond, then Lord Deputy. The envoy met Henry at the chapel door, and addressed him in these words :—" Sta pedibus, Domine Rex ! Dominus meus, Gillapatricius me misit at te, et jussit dicere quod si non vis castigare Petrum Refum, ipse faciet bellum contra te."

" *That Land men named a Younger Rome,*" p. 199.

There is no other example of a nation devoting itself to spiritual things with an ardour and a success comparable to that which distinguished Ireland. During the first three centuries after her conversion to Christianity she resembled one vast monastery. Statements so extraordinary that if they came from Irish sources they might be supposed to have originated in national vanity, have reached us in such numbers from the records of those foreign nations under whose altars the relics of Irish saints and bishops repose, that upon this point there remains no difference of opinion among the learned. For ordinary readers the subject is sufficiently illustrated in the more recent Irish histories. Mr. Moore remarks (*Hist. of Ireland*, vol. I. p. 276): " In order
"to convey to the reader any adequate notion of the
"apostolic labours of that great crowd of learned mis-
"sionaries whom Ireland sent forth, in the course of
"this century, to all parts of Europe, it would be neces-
"sary to transport him to the scenes of their respective
"missions ; to point out the difficulties they had to en-
"counter, and the admirable patience and courage with
"which they surmounted them ; to show how inestimable
"was the service they rendered, during that dark period,
"by keeping the dying embers of learning awake, and

“ how gratefully their names are enshrined in the records of foreign lands, though but faintly, if at all, remembered in their own, winning for her that noble title of the ‘ island of the holy and the learned,’ which throughout the night that overhung the rest of Europe she so long and so proudly wore. Thus the labours of the great missionary, St. Columbanus, were after his death still vigorously carried on, both in France and Italy, by those disciples who had accompanied or joined him from Ireland ; and his favourite Gallus, to whom in dying he bequeathed his pastoral staff, became the founder of an abbey in Switzerland, which was, in the thirteenth century, erected into a principedom, while the territory belonging to it, through all changes, bore the name of St. Gall. * * * This pious Irishman has been called, by a foreign martyrologist, the apostle of the Allemanian nation. Another disciple and country man of St. Columbanus, named Deicola, or, in Irish, Dichuill, enjoyed like his master the patronage and friendship of the monarch Clotaire II., who endowed the monastic establishment formed by him at Luthra with considerable grants of land.”

He proceeds to enumerate many other monuments of early Irish devotion, as the tomb of the Irish priest Caidoc, in the monastery of Centula in Ponthieu, and the hermitage of St. Fiacre, to which Anne of Austria, in the year 1641, made her pilgrimage on foot. He records the labours of St. Fursa among the East Angles, and afterwards in France, and of his brothers Ultan and Foillan in Brabant ; of St. Livin in Ghent ; of St. Fridolin beside the Rhine. He refers to the two Irishmen successively bishops of Strasburg, St. Arbogast, and St. Florentius ; to the two brothers Erard and Albert, whose

tombs were long shewn at Ratisbon ; to St. Wiro, to whom Pepin used to confess barefooted ; to St. Kilian, the great apostle of Francona, who consummated his labours by martyrdom, and who is still honoured at Wurtzburg as its patron saint. He proceeds to commemorate Cataldus, patron of Tarentum, and at one period an ornament of the celebrated school of Lismore, and Virgilius, or Feargal, denounced to the Pope by Boniface as a heretic for having anticipated at that early period the discovery of the " antipodes," and maintained "that there was another world, and other men "under the earth." This great man propagated the Gospel among the Carinthians. He then records the selection by Charlemagne of two Irishmen, Clement and Albinus, one of whom he placed at the head of a seminary founded by him in France, while the other presided over a similar institution at Pavia ; a third Irishman, Dungal, being especially consulted by the same prince on account of his astronomical knowledge. This celebrated teacher carried on a controversy with Claudius, Bishop of Turin, who had revived the heterodox opinions of Vigilantius against the veneration of the saints. He bequeathed to the monastery of Bobio his library, the greater part of which is still preserved at Milan.

Mr. Moore next illustrates the remarkable knowledge of Greek possessed by the early Irish ecclesiastics, a circumstance accounted for by the fact that the fame of the Irish churches and schools had attracted many Greeks to Ireland. Advancing to the ninth century he records Sedulins and Donatus, the former of whom had become so celebrated from his writings that the Pope created him Bishop of Oretto, and despatched him to Spain in order that he might compose the differences

which had arisen among the clergy there, while the latter was made Bishop of Fiesole. Of his writings nothing remains except the Latin verses in which he celebrates his native land under its early name of Scotia.

“ Finibus occiduis describitur optima tellus

Nomine et antiquis Scotia dicta libris.

Insula dives opum, gemmarum vestis et auri ;

Commoda corporibus, aere, sole, solo,” &c.

He next gives an account of the far-famed John Scotus Erigena, and remarks upon the influence of the early Irish writers on the scholastic philosophy.—MOORE's *History*, vol. I. p. 276-307.

THE END.







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